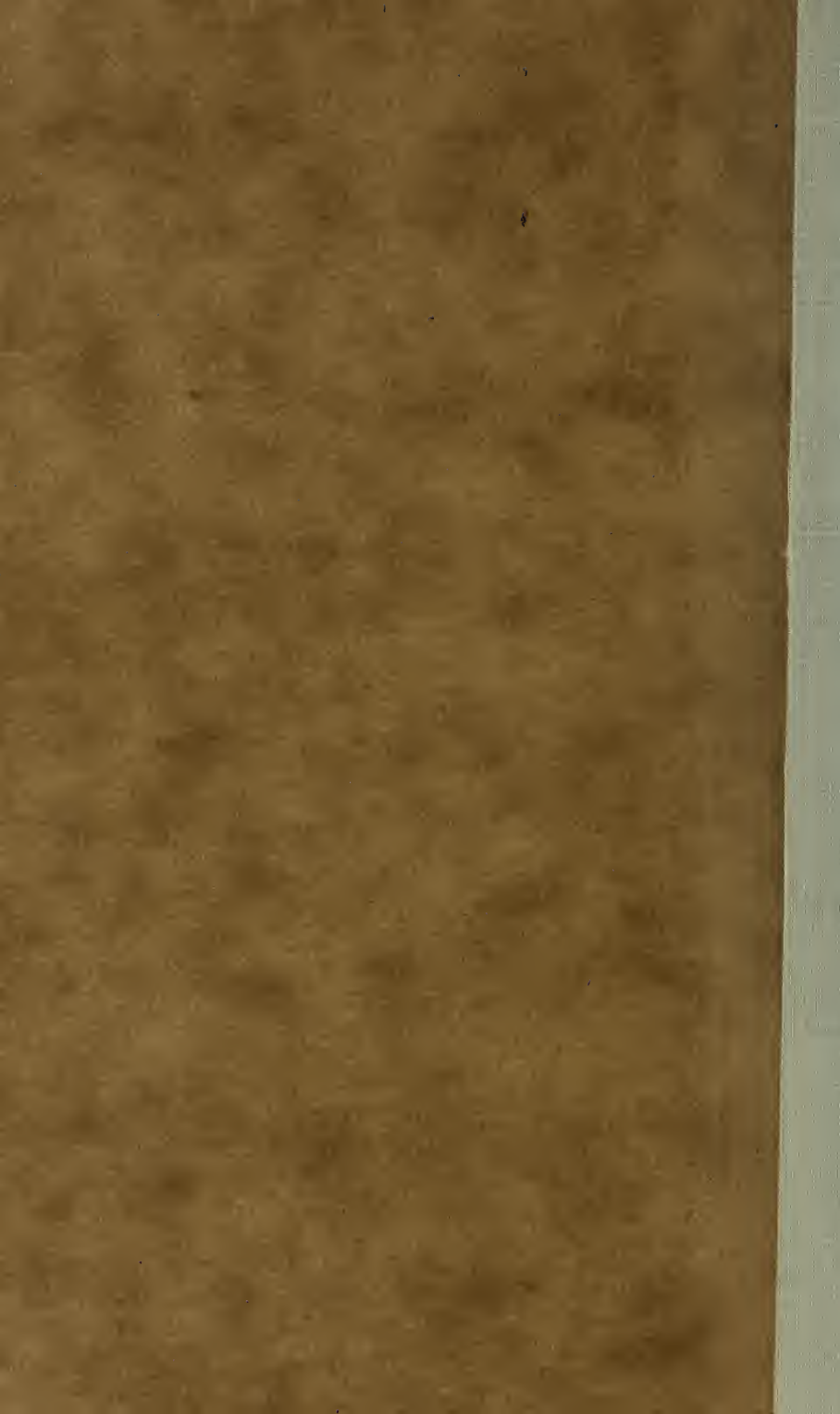


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London, 1920.

Communist unity con-  
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# Communist Unity Convention

*London, July 31st and August 1st, 1920*

## Official Report



LONDON :

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN,

21A MAIDEN LANE, STRAND, W.C.2.

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

### PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

THOS. BELL, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C.2.

GEO. DEER, 115 Cannon Street, Lincoln.

W. J. HEWLETT, 72 Gladstone Street, Abertillery.

J. F. HODGSON, 65 Norton Road, Reading.

ARTHUR MACMANUS, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C.2.

C. L'ESTRANGE MALONE, M.P., 7 Addison Mansions, S.W.

(Mrs.) D. B. MONTEFIORE, "Wayside," Crowborough, Sussex.

WM. PAUL, Pen Bryn, Littleover, Derby.

FRED SHAW, 35 Blacker Road North, Birkby, Huddersfield.

ROBERT STEWART, 19 Milnbank Road, Dundee.

A. A. WATTS, L.C.C., 20 Selwyn Road, Bow, E.3.

F. WILLIS, 26 Clifford Gardens, Kensal Rise, N.W.10.

*Chairman:* ARTHUR MACMANUS.

*Treasurer:* A. A. WATTS, L.C.C.

*Secretary:* ALBERT INKPIN

*Official Organ:* "The Communist."

*Temporary Central Office:* - 21a Maiden Lane, Strand,  
London, W.C.2. Telephone: Gerrard 877.



# Communist Unity Convention

THE National Convention to establish the Communist Party of Great Britain was held on Saturday, July 31st, 1920, at the Cannon Street Hotel, London, E.C., and on the day following at the International Socialist Club, 28, East Road, London, E.C.

The Convention was summoned by the Joint Provisional Committee of the Communist Unity Conference, representing the British Socialist Party, the Communist Unity Group and the S. Wales Communist Council.

The circular of invitation to Convention read as follows:—

TO THE SECRETARY,

July 7th, 1920

Dear Comrade,—The negotiations for uniting the various revolutionary left wing organisations in Britain in one Communist Party have now taken definite shape. A great National Convention to establish the Communist Party and settle all questions of immediate tactics, will be held in the Cannon Street Hotel, London, E.C., on Saturday, July 31st, at 2 p.m.

An invitation to representation at this National Convention is cordially extended to all organisations, branches of organisations, local communist groups and independent socialist societies that accept the fundamental bases of communist unity: (a) The Dictatorship of the working class; (b) The Soviet System; (c) The Third International.

All bodies participating in summoning the National Convention are pledged to abide by its decisions on points of tactics, and to merge their organisations in the new Communist Party. Representation at the Convention will be held to imply that the branches, groups and societies represented will also accept its decisions and become branches of the Communist Party.

Your branch, group or society is cordially invited to send delegates to the Convention to inaugurate the Communist Party and determine its tactics and policy. Representation will be at the rate of one delegate for every 25 members or part thereof, and voting at the Convention will be on the same basis. The representation fee will be 2s. 6d. for every 25 members or part of 25 members represented.

Delegates' application form and agenda for the Convention are attached hereto. Copies of a manifesto, "A Call for a Communist Party," are also enclosed.

Delegates' application forms should be sent in at once. Further copies of the manifesto can be obtained on application. The names and addresses of secretaries of unattached groups and societies to whom invitations to representation should be sent will be warmly appreciated; and where speakers are required to explain more fully the object of the Convention, they will gladly be sent if mutually satisfactory dates can be arranged.

The Communist International calls us to action. We are confident that all sincere Communists will respond to that call and help us to make the National Convention and the Communist Party an overwhelming success.

On behalf of the Joint Provisional Committee for the Communist Party.

ARTHUR MACMANUS, Chairman.  
ALBERT INKPIN, Secretary.

Albert Inkpin (Secretary) opened the proceedings by recommending that Arthur Macmanus, chairman of the Provisional Committee, be invited to preside. This was agreed to unanimously.

The day the Convention began was the anniversary of that on which Jean Jaurès was assassinated, and the delegates rose and stood in silence as a mark of respect and esteem for him and all others who had fallen in the revolutionary cause.

T. Bell, H. W. Inkpin, Wm. Paul, W. H. Ryde and F. Willis were appointed a Standing Orders Committee.

#### CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The chairman then delivered his opening address. He said it was a sad experience that it had taken three years of Russia in revolution, and two years of actual negotiating and deliberating, to bring into being a conference of this description. There were still people calling themselves Communists who were not represented at the Convention, and this fact indicated the nature of the obstacles and difficulties that had to be overcome. He hoped that no word at that conference—and he was sure this was the feeling of those assembled at it—would be regarded as in any way calculated to widen the breach at present existing between those who were represented and those who were not. He hoped also—and here again he thought the Conference would concur—that in the near future pressure of circumstances might have power to persuade people outside that it was their duty to come in. He thought the Convention itself justified the most optimistic outlook of those who thought there was need of a Communist Party in this country. The agenda before them contained items that would call for serious deliberation and might possibly call for animated contention; but if the Convention was taken in the spirit in which the invitations had been sent out, then, whatever else might happen at it, after to-day there would at least exist in Great Britain one reliable, rigid, straight and determined Communist Party. Given a Communist Party he thought its membership could very well be trusted, and certainly had every claim to be responsible for deciding what attitude that party should adopt on different occasions. He wanted to make one or two general observations with regard to the effect of the birth of the Communist Party. The present Convention was a more effective reply to the solicitations of Russia than anything else that had emanated from this country since the Russian revolution up to the present time. In the past we had been content to respond to Russia with magnanimous resolutions and expressions of sympathy, but, except for one or two very small attempts, we had never yet, as an organised movement, responded to those appeals in the way that a Communist or revolutionary Socialist movement should be responded to. It was a curious coincidence that the sitting of the Convention synchronised with the arrival of the Russian Commissars, who had now for the first time been openly invited by the British



Government. Kameneff and his comrades were expected that evening; it was humiliating to think that having triumphed in their own country the Russian delegation would have to submit to the arrogance and vainglory of the capitalist politicians here. Why should it be at this late date in revolutionary thought and action that, instead of the Russians being met with sympathetic kinship and comradeship, it should be left to Lloyd George, Churchill and the rest of the gang to go there with their hypocrisies and huxtering? There was something in that to regret. We ought by now to have made it so uncomfortable for these people that, instead of standing on a pedestal and dictating to the rest of the world as to how it should conduct itself, they would have enough to do looking after us here to prevent them having any time to worry about other countries. If the Communist Party did not fill that bill it would fail to respond to the spirit that had called it into being. He would ask the delegates to devote themselves to getting through the agenda and doing what the Joint Committee had felt themselves incapable of doing—the Committee could not arrive at a decision in connection with the tactical policy of the Communist Party. The discussion of fundamental principles had been the least difficult task that had been set the Joint Committee during the last two years; at a very early stage there had been general agreement that Communism was accepted as the objective, and that the Soviet régime and dictatorship of the proletariat were indispensable precautions against counter-revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat was the principle on which we should have to meet most opposition, for we had to meet something that possibly did not exist to the same extent in any other country in the world. When there was question of a thing being done, if the process of doing it was likely to soil the coat or skirt of those participating, the Nonconformist conscience demanded that the thing should be dropped however desirable it might be in itself. He hoped the spirit of the Convention would be in opposition to that. We believed that a social revolution was absolutely essential, and that it was our duty to get it however much we might be soiled in the process. Even if there arose a necessity for bloodshed, we could always remember that the lesson of history was that it was never the revolutionary who was responsible for the shedding of blood; it was invariably the counter-revolutionary. There was no subterfuge or intrigue that our capitalist class had not been willing to resort to rather than allow Russia to stand open to the world, justifying Communism as a social constructive force; and the fact that we saw them doing this with Russia at such a remote distance was an indication of what they would do to us.

The chairman concluded by appealing to the delegates to subordinate themselves to the work they had in hand. If the results he anticipated were achieved any self-effacement would

justify itself. If they rose to the standard of responsibility that he was setting before them this would turn out to be the most profitable week-end that the revolutionary movement had ever had in this country.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT.

A question as to the presence of representatives of the press throughout the conference having been disposed of, the next matter to be considered was the Secretary's report. On the motion of Fred Shaw (B.S.P., East Bradford), seconded by F. Barber (B.S.P., Southwark), it was unanimously agreed that this be adopted (see Appendix A).

### FRATERNAL MESSAGES.

The chairman then read various fraternal messages received by the Convention. These are printed in full in Appendix B.

### GENERAL POLICY.

A. A. Purcell (B.S.P., South Salford) then moved the following resolution on behalf of the Joint Provisional Committee :—

“The Communists in conference assembled declare for the Soviet (or Workers' Council) system as a means whereby the working class shall achieve power and take control of the forces of production; declare for the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary means for combating the counter-revolution during the transition period between capitalism and communism; and stand for the adoption of these means as steps towards the establishment of a system of complete communism wherein the means of production shall be communally owned and controlled. This Conference therefore establishes itself the Communist Party on the foregoing basis.”

He said that during the last three months wherever he and some others had gone they had been confronted with a request as to when England was going to do something with regard to the formation of a strong Communist party. That was because in Norway, Sweden, and elsewhere this work had already been done, or, at any rate, Communists in those countries had already gathered the forces together for the purpose of being prepared to work on the necessary lines. Anybody who had seen the development that some present had seen could hardly come back to this country without being convinced, if they were members of the working-class at all, of the very urgent need that existed for the formation of what he regarded as an important guide to the trade union or industrial movement in this country. We required that guide here just as it was required in the case of Russia. He believed that in the resolution we had a clear statement that many members of the industrial movement, mainly unattached to any Socialist organisation, would be prepared to rally round. A great many trade unionists to-day used the cry: “Control of Industry”; most of these hardly knew at the moment—because of the want of a guide—where that was taking them to, or what was expected of them in that connection. Here we saw it clearly laid down that the purpose of the Communist Party

was to assist and act as a guide to the proletarian movement. We must make certain that we did not quarrel about mere phraseology; but that we regarded as important the need for urging the working-class itself to rally for the purpose of being capable of owning and controlling the means of production in this country. He believed that if we adapted our methods we could rally round us, particularly in the large centres, masses of the working-class prepared to fight and give of their best in the interest of such a movement as this. The resolution declared for the dictatorship of the proletariat as a means of combating the counter-revolution in the transitional period between Capitalism and Communism. That, again, was a statement of the highest importance, because it urged the working-class to come into the ranks of Communism as well as to assist in the work of Communist agitation. In declaring ourselves within the four corners of this resolution, we were laying down a plan that the working-class of this country could rally to. Capitalism, he believed, was decaying at its very roots. The industrial organisations might not know that; but, so long as they were prepared to revolt, it was our business to go to them and say: "While you are prepared to revolt, we, at the same time, are prepared to show you the machine that must be used in order to take possession of the means of production and work them in the interests of yourselves and the community generally." For the purpose of doing that we had to recognise the hard concrete facts of industrial organisation. It was useless continually prodding and pinpricking the working-class; we were not going to get the best from the working-class by doing that; we had to take them in hand and show them the way laid down in this resolution. He thought we should do our utmost to be unanimous about this resolution in order that it might not merely go forth to the international Communist organisations of the world as our definite declaration, but that it could be taken to our people and they be asked to recognise in this instrument the first step towards success in their own emancipation.

The resolution having been formally seconded,

H. Webb (Ashton Communist Group) said that delegates had come with definite mandates, and nothing that could be said would influence those mandates in the slightest degree; but what was said might be carried back by the delegates to the groups and might affect the action of those groups in the future. Certain words had been left out of the resolution which would give it much more effectiveness; what was needed was the dictatorship of the proletariat, not only in the form of the Soviet Council, but also in the form of the man with the gun in his hand. To men who had been used by imperialism in the world war we must point out the historic and revolutionary value of the use of the gun in the hands of the working-class. In this



classic home of capitalism its downfall would be in the form of a civil struggle which would be consummated in the streets, the workers battling through by the guidance of the Communist Party.

C. L. Gibbons (Ferndale Socialist Society) said he wanted made a little clearer the point in the resolution which declared for the Soviet or Workers' Council, and then went on to state the means whereby the working-class should achieve power. Seeing that this was the beginning of the Communist Party, he thought we should quite definitely state that the achieving of power would come from the soldiers' councils, and the actual control of the forces of production from the workers' councils. He thought this should be made clear and put into the resolution.

W. Mellor (Guild Communist Group) said he did not want to discuss the resolution, because it seemed to him they had come to the Convention agreeing with it. If they did not agree with the resolution they should go away, if they did agree they should pass it without making long speeches as to its meaning. But he suggested it was urgent that some reference should be made to the Third International. He had put through to the Standing Orders Committee a suggestion that the Third International should be mentioned in this resolution on general policy, and he hoped the Conference would agree that we should not only stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat, agree with the Soviet system as the means whereby we could achieve Communism, and agree that Communism was our aim, but, as a Communist party, we should at this crisis declare our adhesion to the Third International. He asked the Chairman to use his influence with the Standing Orders Committee to get them to include in the resolution a certain declaration of our adhesion to the Third International.

A. A. Watts (B.S.P., Rochdale) said he rose to voice the opinion of the branch that an effort should be made to include any other body who had not seen their way yet to fall in with this Convention. We wanted one Communist Party here, not more.

R. Stewart (Socialist Prohibition Group) said he did not want to be taken as stressing too much the point of the man with the gun. A great many people talked about guns who would run away when they saw one. He did not know whether he could use a gun if he had one, and he did not know much about the dictatorship of the proletariat. What we knew was that the dictatorship of the proletariat was necessary, and that we should require to do as circumstances determined. He did not suppose the sincerity of those who were not gun-men would be questioned; we should all count it a pleasure and pride to live and die for the Communist movement. But he thought the Provisional Committee would be wise to devote themselves to building up

such an organisation as would make it possible for the minimum of violence to achieve the maximum for the Communist Party. Even the Capitalist could not use guns upon us, except so far as he could persuade members of our class that somehow or other our policy was detrimental to their interest. Whether the guns came soon or late, or whether they came at all, there might be moments when it was far more revolutionary to refuse to have anything to do with guns. As to the Third International, it did not seem to him necessary to write in explicit terms that we were attached to it; the less we loaded the resolution with phrases, the better. What we needed to do was to form as soon as possible a party sufficiently strong to bear itself in any manner dictated by the circumstances of the moment.

The Chairman said he recommended that the words "and adhesion to the Third International" should be added to the resolution.

This was unanimously agreed to.

The amended resolution was then put to the meeting, and carried unanimously also as follows:—

"The Communists in conference assembled declare for the Soviet (or Workers' Council) system as a means whereby the working class shall achieve power and take control of the forces of production; declare for the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary means for combating the counter-revolution during the transition period between capitalism and communism; and stand for the adoption of these means as steps towards the establishment of a system of complete communism wherein the means of production shall be communally owned and controlled. This Conference therefore establishes itself the Communist Party on the foregoing basis, and declares its adhesion to the Third International."

#### PARLIAMENTARY ACTION.

The next matter to be brought before the Convention was the following resolution on Parliamentary Action:—

"The Communist Party repudiates the reformist view that a social revolution can be achieved by the ordinary methods of parliamentary democracy, but regards parliamentary and electoral action generally as providing a valuable means of propaganda and agitation towards the revolution. The tactics to be employed by representatives of the Party elected to Parliament or local bodies must be laid down by the Party itself according to the national or local circumstances. In all cases such representatives must be considered as holding a mandate from the Party, and not from the particular constituency for which they happen to sit."

The Chairman said there were several amendments to this resolution, but they did not affect its general tenour, and would practically be included in the discussion.

T. Bell (Glasgow Communist Unity Group), moving the resolution on behalf of the Joint Provisional Committee, said that, so far as the Joint Committee were concerned, the Communist Unity Group and the B.S.P. were in complete agreement upon the need for and the advisability of taking Parliamentary action, but the present resolution had arisen in the course of the negotiations with the W.S.F. and had been held very important



at the time. After the defection of the W.S.F. the resolution might have been cleared off, since there was no point of difference between the remaining groups that made up the Unity Committee; but, as there was still a considerable amount of hesitancy in many groups on the question of Parliamentary action, for and against, it had been thought better to allow the question to be ventilated at the Conference; that being the safest and simplest way to make the position clear, so far as Parliamentary action was concerned. It would be seen that the resolution from the very first repudiated the reformist idea that a social revolution could be achieved by the ordinary methods of Parliamentary democracy. In this respect its point of view was common to Communist parties internationally at the present time. He and those who agreed with him did not believe it was possible to effect a peaceful transformation in the Parliamentary bourgeois democracy as understood to-day, and thereby to work out the emancipation of the working-class; they believed that the Parliamentary institution as it existed to-day, the constituency in itself, was entirely foreign to the purpose of the Communist state of society they had in mind. Consequently, in preference to the Parliamentary constituency, they rather looked to the more direct method of representation as expressed through the workers' committees whether in industrial or social life. With regard to Parliamentary and electoral action as providing a valuable means of propaganda and agitation towards the revolution, while they did not place any faith in the Parliamentary institution in itself, and did not believe it was capable of fitting into the scheme of things that they as Communists had in mind, nevertheless they thought it of considerable value to revolutionary propaganda not to shut the door upon any avenue whatsoever that was going to liberate the minds of the masses from their superstitious faith in Parliamentary democracy. He thought the best policy to adopt towards that particular objective was to demonstrate inside the House of Commons that, so far as the working class were concerned, there was nothing to be hoped for in that chamber. By breaking the Parliamentary precedents and conventionalities which played so large a part in shaping the minds of the workers, we could do a great deal to break down that reverence for Parliamentary institutions that many of our fellow-workers had. This was a bone of contention, he knew; the contention arising because it was thought by some that by going into the House of Commons we were sacrificing some great principle. The first argument brought against participating in Parliamentary action was that before sitting in the House of Commons it was necessary to take the oath of allegiance. Speaking for the Provisional Committee, they had no dubiety on this point. It was laid down in the resolution that the representatives of the Communist Party must be considered as holding a mandate from the party

executive, and that they would be at all times under the control, management, and supervision of the Executive Committee—that was what it amounted to. If, in the course of our agitation, the Executive thought it advisable that members of the Communist Party should be in the House of Commons, the oath should not stand in the way; it was a question to be decided in relation to the expediency of the moment, whether for our agitational purposes it was more valuable to refuse to take the oath, or to take the oath in order to gain some other objective more valuable for our revolutionary agitation. And so on with reference to all the questions as to precedents and conventionalities inside the House. He suggested that Communist candidates only had allegiance to the principles of Communism and the movement now organised in the Third International. Our ethic and morality had to be drawn from our fundamental principles of Communism. In reference to action inside the House of Commons, our policy all the time was a critical, destructive one, exposing the fraudulent character of our modern Parliamentary democracy—which was not a free institution at all, but was an institution controlled by high finance. That being so, he suggested that it was the business of the Communist Party inside the House of Commons, in order to liberate the minds of the masses with regard to capitalist fetishes, critically to examine every situation that arose, and to criticise the points of view put forward by our opponents, whether bourgeois, semi-Radical, or anything else, and, generally speaking, help to focus the attention of the working class upon the vital interests so far as the Communist agitation was concerned. As to the clause, “In all cases such representatives must be considered as holding a mandate from the party, and not from the particular constituency for which they happen to sit,” those of us who had been identified with the political Labour movement for any length of time knew the hackneyed phrase used by the politicians of all shades of opinion, that once they went inside the House of Commons they ceased to have any connection with their particular organisation and represented the interests of all sections in the community. This was a pretence; it was impossible—and this was the inherent weakness of the Parliamentary constituency—for any representative to express the desires and wills of all the conflicting class elements that made up a constituency. By this resolution we sought to make it emphatic that the candidate sent up by the Communist Party would contest the seat under the surveillance of the Communist Party Executive, and would go to the House of Commons with a mandate from the party—that he would not draw his mandate from the constituency. That was the point of view sought to be brought out in the resolution—that we must have discipline to the Communist Executive from all members, whether inside or outside the House of Commons.

The resolution was seconded, and it was agreed, on the suggestion of the Chairman, that the discussion should take the form of argument for and against Parliamentary action; leaving till afterwards all question of amending the resolution.

C. L. Gibbons (Ferndale Socialist Society) spoke against the resolution. He said there was perhaps not one present whose mind was not made up; but, if there were a few doubters, he asked these to look at the matter from the practical standpoint. All who had taken part in the movement knew that only very few men would be found with much energy, time, money, and enthusiasm to put into it; and the matter should be looked at from that point of view quite apart from the question whether any good could be got out of political agitation of this kind. We had to measure the gain in comparison with the amount of energy, money, time, and enthusiasm spent to get it, and to consider what results the same expenditure might bring if put into something else. We had not the men, enthusiasm, time, or money even to do vital organisation and educational work in the movement, and to ask us at this stage, when we had to put in the most intensive propaganda, to do work which even the mover of the resolution told us he recognised was not vital, was asking us to be fools in face of the present situation. Every argument of the mover had been against taking part in political action. The average man would say: "If you tell me an institution can give me no result in the long run, I am not going to waste my time upon it." We had to appeal to the average man; we must not think we could carry through the revolution without him. Apart from that, we needed every man, every penny, every ounce of enthusiasm, and every moment of time in the vital work of the educational and industrial field.

C. Abbott (Southwark "Herald" League) protested that an amendment that his group had sent up against Parliamentary action ought to have been taken. It seemed to him that most of those in the unofficial section of the S.L.P. and the B.S.P. wanted this question of Parliamentary action pushed, and when that had been done they would go on with the old game of coming in with the Labour Party. A man sent to Parliament could not be recalled, but would sit there as long as he liked. In the factory, where you talked to the workman, was the point where organisation should take place.

H. Macmillan (Glasgow Garngad I.L.P.) said the Convention had assembled to try to arrange a specialist line of tactics in order to carry out our programme. We were entering on a new phase of the class war. The class war must be conducted in every country very much as any other kind of war—we must take into consideration the geographical situation of the country, its economic position, and the temperament of the people. Taking all these points into consideration, he had come to the conclusion



that it would be a great mistake to cut ourselves adrift from bodies who undertook to run the masses by electoral methods. The question of tactics might be illustrated by the story of an enormous boulder which used to divide the road near a small village in Russia. When it was desired to remove this boulder a firm of engineers was consulted. These offered to break it up with hammer and wedge, and cart it away, the cost being five thousand roubles. This sum being too much for the village to pay, another firm of engineers was consulted, and these offered to blow the boulder to pieces with explosives, at a cost of three thousand roubles. This was still too much, and a navy learning what was wanted offered to remove the boulder for two hundred roubles. His offer was at first pooh-poohed, but was eventually accepted. The next morning the navy presented himself on the job with pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow, and began to dig a great hole in front of the boulder. The soil was soft. He dug it out and wheeled it to the side of the road until the hole was large enough; then, using a great log of wood for a fulcrum and a stout pole for a lever, with the aid of a company of soldiers who happened to come along, he toppled the boulder into the hole. All that then remained for him to do was to fill in sufficient earth on top of the boulder to make the road level. The tactics of the Bolsheviks in Russia had been like this—they had simply overthrown Tsardom and buried it. But the obstacle that British revolutionists had to shift was an entirely different boulder, resting not on soft clay, but on a substratum as hard as the boulder itself.

T. J. Watkins (Trethomas Communist Unity Group) said that if he had not been an anti-parliamentarian before coming to the Convention, the mover of the resolution would have made him one. It did not appear to him that either guns or Parliament could bring about the thing we were after. We should not be such fools as to face guns armless, and we knew that so long as we used a weapon as obsolete as Parliament we were not going to bring satisfaction to the working class. He would suggest a unified wage demand in place of the present higgledy-piggledy methods of the trade union movement. This would be tackling the capitalist in the only place where we could tackle him; for if we were to do anything we must reduce his profits in a scientific manner. The only intelligent sane line for the Convention to go upon was that of taking industrial action.

J. R. Stead (St. Helens Socialist Society) said he had always understood that it was the economic power outside Parliament that controlled the inevitable development of working-class conditions. Men like Brace, Thomas, and Clynes would probably have tended towards the revolutionary position had they not become members of the House of bombast and gas which was ruled by the executive of the capitalist class.

Robert Williams (B.S.P. National Branch) said he would like to support the general principle of the resolution without committing himself actually to the whole of the contents. To be a revolutionary did not necessarily imply either that one was a Utopian or an impossibilist. We must have some regard in contemplating revolutionary possibilities to revolutionary occurrences elsewhere. The Convention had already agreed to affiliation with the Third International, and affiliation with that revolutionary organisation would impose duties and obligations upon us as well as entitle us to claim rights and privileges. The duties and obligations would be to accept in a general way, according to racial, national, and economic considerations and requirements, the general policy of the International. Personally, he had had an opportunity of talking with Lenin. Lenin should not be looked upon as a pope—we did not want popes in the revolutionary movement—but Lenin was entitled by the masterful character of his strategic conceptions, as well as by his tactics, to a certain amount of consideration. He (the speaker) had talked also to Tchitcherine, who said that Lenin was a man of unerring perception and intuition, and that in every decision he had helped to frame between the first and second revolutions of 1917, through the Brest-Litovsk peace and onwards, he had been instinctively right. Lenin, speaking to him (Williams) had said: "Of course, you must utilise Parliamentary action"; and it was a surprise to be told by Watkins that if we wanted to apply revolutionary tactics we must co-ordinate the wage movements and make a simultaneous demand for an increase of wages. Did anyone believe that the perpetuation of the wage system would bring about the destruction of capitalist society? The employers took care that every advance in wages was passed on to the consumer with a little for extra profit to themselves. The delegates had cheered to the echo greetings from Soviet countries—Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Holland, and Hungary—and in every instance the Communist body was pledged to political action. Would anyone tell him our movement would not be considerably stronger if we had a man like Karl Liebknecht in the House of Commons? It would be a considerable accession of strength if we had only one man in the House of Commons to-day who, every time a Cabinet Minister got up to make a statement, would repeat: "You're a liar!" That in itself would be sufficient to intensify our propaganda. If half a dozen men were championing the cause of the proletariat in the House of Commons, we could make it possible to use the pages of "Hansard" as revolutionary propaganda.

W. Hill (Oldham Communist Unity Group) said that General Booth, when questioned as to money he got from a public-house for his religious work, replied: "I would take money from the



devil to do God's work." We should be prepared to take every instrument of capitalism and use it to smash the capitalist system, and Parliament could be used to good effect if we got the right men. One suggestion from the group he represented was that before a man was accepted as candidate he should put into writing an application for the Chiltern Hundreds, and hand this to the Executive of the Party. Then, if this individual departed from what he had promised to do, the date could be put into the application, and this posted to the necessary quarters. Thus the man would be recalled. The floor of the House of Commons was the finest propaganda platform in the country; even the capitalist press could boom for its own purposes a man like Grayson when he got expelled. Supposing we had twenty Communists prepared to make fools of themselves by ignoring the precedents of the House of Commons and making an uproar, simply proving to the people that a geographical instrument like Parliament could not accomplish an industrial purpose such as the workers wanted. By obstructive tactics, Parliament could be used to great effect. We did not want men who would go there to ameliorate the condition of the workers, but men whose object was to smash the machine.

J. Hamilton (Liverpool Communist Unity Group), speaking against the resolution, said he wanted to point out to Williams that political action was not necessarily parliamentary. Political activity and agitation could be carried on in other directions than by putting up candidates for Parliament. The question was one of tactics and vital so far as the advanced elements in this country were concerned. Personally, he was firmly convinced that putting candidates forward at the present time was waste of time and money. When the revolutionary time came in this country it might not be on a political issue; it was more likely to be on an industrial question, such as that of wages that the crisis would arise, when the Communist Party, in conjunction with the industrial machine, would have to take control. If we wasted time trying to impress upon the workers the necessity of sending individuals to Parliament, this would make confusion worse confounded. The perfecting of the industrial machine was necessary. Undoubtedly it was the industrial machine that would have to function if revolution took place, and not the Parliamentary machine, which would be cast on one side.

H. Webb said he spoke against Parliamentary action, and perhaps the opposition of the group he represented was somewhat novel in certain aspects. Williams had mentioned the value of a Liebknecht on the floor of the House of Commons; but in the Ashton and Oldham district they thought that in spite of the lines on which the Communist Party was founded, we were not certain of getting men of the type of Liebknecht on to the floor of the House of Commons. That being so, they were convinced

that anti-Parliamentism expressed in this conference would be of value in forming a Communist Party of such a character that if ultimately it had to conform itself to some part of Parliamentary action, it would have within its ranks units free from a policy of bettering their personal ego on the floor of the House of Commons. It had been suggested that it would be of value to have men in Parliament obstructing certain measures, and it had also been suggested that it would be of value to have such matter published in "Hansard"; but the capitalist press could also publish matter discussed in the House of Commons, and with the facilities at its disposal, it could use controversy in a more hostile sense than we could. Further, with regard to revolutionary political action outside the House of Commons, his group had had a little experience. They had run a Communist candidate in the Gorton division, and had been convinced that the result was not worth the time and money spent upon the contest. Had there been a revolutionary Communist party prepared to spend the same money in getting at the industrial masses in the workshop, the results would have been more valuable. But on this question his group were prepared to stand loyally by the findings of this Convention, no matter what those findings might be. Parliamentary action or affiliation to the Labour Party were absolutely minor matters in comparison with stirring up the working class. If we are eventually to have some form of Parliamentary activity along obstructionist lines, we should see to it that the men who had to move along those lines were real revolutionary fighters; and a vote against Parliamentary action now would enable us to get this.

W. Mellor said he took it that no delegate at the Conference regarded this question as a matter of principle; it was one of expediency and tactics. He wanted to point out to delegates that it was not merely a question of Westminster; it was a question of Southwark, Manchester, Liverpool, of all the local machinery throughout the British Islands; not merely of a bold man saying to Winston Churchill or the Speaker "You're a liar," but of hard working-men Communists, getting hold of the central authorities and powers inside their own localities. We should not run the revolution from London, but each in his own place where he lived. We had the machinery, and, rotten though it was, ought not to throw it away. Delegates had spoken of the working class, but who were the working class? In the main the working class liked all the people we disliked; we had to recognise and to build our organisation on fact—not theory. The fact was that the British working class now had only got to the stage where they were politically beginning to be conscious. Go anywhere into an agricultural district now—and the agricultural districts were going to be key centres in any revolution—and what were the people there thinking about? They were just beginning to see some kind of

glimmer in having somebody in Parliament to represent them. He thought them wrong, but that was the psychology of the workers, and we had to work with that psychology at the basis of our organisation in a realist, and not a utopian, party. If in this Conference we said that we believed conditions were ripe in this country to get the revolution, without using every weapon we could lay hands on, we were writing down the Conference as lunatics, or dreamers, dwelling centuries ahead. However much we might fear the contamination of the capitalist machine, we had to work inside that machine if we were going to smash it. We must look at the matter not from the high peak of Marxian dogma, but from the low ground of Marxian analysis. Marx showed that we had to use the instruments that were at our disposal at the moment. These included on the one hand industrial organisation, and, on the other hand, the power that came to the workers in local and national assemblies.

Mrs. D. B. Montefiore (Glasgow College B.S.P.) said she would like to remind the Convention that one of the messages read that morning was from Clara Zetkin. There was no doubt about Clara Zetkin being a revolutionary. She had been an intimate friend of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, and had done immense work among the workers of Germany in organising and propaganda. Yet on the first chance of getting to the Reichstag, Clara Zetkin had presented herself and been elected. In that position her voice carried not only in Germany, but in other countries; her revolutionary messages spoken in the Reichstag had been repeated in newspapers here. Another case in point was that of Mrs. Snowden, who was to contest Leicester. We should miss our opportunity as Communists if we did not put up a candidate against her. Mrs. Snowden had thrown herself into the arms of the bourgeoisie to insult Soviet Russia, and ought to be met by a Communist so as to show the workers of England where she was, and where the Communist position was. Important as the industrial method was, important as was the stopping of making munitions, at the same time we must go into Parliament and work there.

E. W. Cant (B.S.P., Paisley) said there were one or two arguments which those who opposed the resolution did not seem justified in using. Comrades who opposed the resolution declared that our main purpose was to get at the man on the job; but whilst it was absolutely necessary to get at the man on the job, you did not get at him always at his job. There were many men in industry who would not listen to you except at a period of crisis, such as a strike or a general election. As much industrial propaganda was done in an election campaign as during the same amount of ordinary trade union workshop activity. Comrades must realise that fact, and realise that it was not always at the factory gate that the factory worker was waiting to listen to



them. The question had been asked, how were we to justify ourselves participating in Parliament and at the same time arguing that Parliament was no use as a means of emancipation? But the man in the street was not so critical as the average member of a Socialist party, and was not so hidebound theoretically as all that. Another point was that the advocates of anti-Parliamentism and direct action said that we had to perfect the industrial machine so as to have an ideal industrial machine at our disposal. If we had to wait until we got a perfect industrial organisation we should have to wait until Doomsday. Circumstances had so worked it that a crisis would be forced upon us, and as to whether we should take full advantage of that crisis, would not depend upon the measure of perfection of our organisation, but it would depend on the amount of propaganda we had done. That propaganda could be done at the workshop gate, inside the factory, inside the public house, at general elections, and at all times; and he was prepared to advocate the use of the Parliamentary weapon so as to get at the workers' minds.

R. Stewart (Socialist Prohibition Group) said there would be elections whether we participated or not, and the chances were that we should spend more time telling the other fellow that it was not worth while, than it would take to do the job and be sure that it was not worth while. We should not keep out of Parliamentary elections however much we said we wanted to do so; people congregated to hear what the candidates had to say at election times, and the opportunity for propaganda ought not to be missed. Beyond this, it was our business to go where laws were made, so as to annul all the laws that sanctioned theft and to substitute a law by which theft would be sanctioned no longer. We were very apt to dignify these tactics into principles, and we spoke from time to time as if we had to make our vestments out of whole cloth; but we did not have whole cloth, and we had to make them out of the material at hand. The money spent on elections was as well spent as that on any other kind of propaganda. No one could say what the Communist members would do on their first day in Parliament. Quite likely they would be thrown out. He liked the spirit of those who were personally opposed to Parliamentary action, but were not going to allow their opposition to it to queer the pitch for the formation of a real Communist party. He did not know how many elections we should be given the opportunity to take part in; but he knew that capitalism had a long arm that could reach out and take away persons in important positions if it thought such action in its own interest. Getting down to rigid principle, so far as he was concerned, he was prepared to use any instrument that was flexible enough to apply the principle. We needed a flexible instrument to apply a rigid principle, and that rigid principle was the common ownership of the means of production.

L. Manoin (B.S.P., Sheffield) supported the resolution.

E. Marsh (B.S.P., Central Hackney) said he supported the resolution because in his opinion it was necessary to use every weapon at our command to fight the master class. Anyone who supported industrial action but not Parliamentary action, or vice versa, was like a man going into a boxing match with one arm behind him. The master class organised alike on the industrial and political fields, and we should take a lesson from them.

F. L. Kerran (B.S.P., Central London) said the delegates were in too much of a hurry. They talked as if they had the whole of the masses of the people at their disposal; but, as a matter of fact, they only represented a very small fraction of the workers of this country. We could not make bricks without straw, and we could not bring about a revolution without having a certain number of the masses to support us. Turning to countries where they had used political action for a considerable period, quite recently there had been a political crisis in Germany, and the capitalist press said that the Parliamentary system of Germany was breaking down. Italy was another country where the Parliamentary system was rapidly breaking down. Why? Because the Italian workers had sent such a large body of men to the Italian Parliament that the Government was almost impotent in face of their opposition. As soon as we got the workers industrially organised in any country, we found that fact reflected in the political aspect of that country. It was absurd to suppose that you could have any country industrially well organised and politically unorganised; the two things went hand in hand. When they had the two things together, the workers would soon find out by experience that the old method of political organisation was imperfect and should be scrapped. As soon as we in this country got as far advanced as Germany and Italy were, we should find that the political system as it was known to-day, would break up and make room for another system.

G. Roberts (B.S.P., Stalybridge) said he was a realist in the first sense of the word, and his experience recently had been that we could not ignore the psychology of the working class, whether we liked it or not. The Parliamentary institution of this country was of as long standing as the wage system itself, and when elections were taking place the working class usually took a very intense interest in political matters. Furthermore, he had noticed that when a Labour man stood in any constituency, whether or not the Labour man attacked the capitalist system and advocated Socialism, the press and other representatives of the capitalist class saw to it that the question of Socialism was introduced—with this difference, that they gave an absolutely wrong impression of what Socialism would be. The consequence was that at that period when the workers were interested they were hoodwinked. He thought it was the duty of a member of the Communist party



not only to attack the capitalist system, but to defend the working class politically as well as industrially; he was aware that we could never hope to bring in the revolution by the Parliamentary machine, but he recognised also that the strength of the Socialist movement did not depend upon the numerical state of the vote, but rather upon the tenacity with which we defended the working class all the time. He believed in defending the working class, not because he wanted to standardise their slavery, but because in defending them he was attacking capitalism, and because they were the class that would bring about the revolution.

A. Siffleet (B.S.P., Tooting) said that in favouring Parliamentary action because we simply could not afford to omit its use, he did not imply that he attached undue importance to it. He was of opinion that there was no time for us to convert the electorate to any extent and get our men on the floor of the House of Commons in any number. He believed the revolution was too near for that. At the same time we had to recognise that the master class were adepts so far as working-class psychology was concerned. We had all seen artists in clay who made a man's face—made a dozen men's faces, rolled up the clay and threw it on one side. So at election times the working-class mind was created to perform certain offices, and afterwards rolled up and thrown on one side. Three months after electing the Government to office the workers found they had been deluded. He thought our political action would be far more effective outside the House of Commons than inside. It was our duty to try to get the workers to think about the revolution which might be on them at any moment—to think how it would affect them and the part they would play in it. Answering Comrade Stewart's reference to guns, we did not want guns if we could avoid them; but force would not be withheld so far as the master class were concerned. The workers must consider the question of armed force, if necessary, to meet what would be brought against them. It was not enough to say, "Wait until the time," because we should find the other man armed and ourselves with nothing but ideals. We must avail ourselves of the Parliamentary weapon, but not overrate it. Its only utility was for the education of the masses to bring about the social revolution.

T. Bell replied to the discussion. He said there had been nothing substantial advocated against participation in Parliamentary elections; the main point was that such participation was not vital. Not vital to what? Not vital, he presumed, to the Communist movement. But all spheres of life where the working-class mind was to be influenced were vital to the Communist movement. We had got beyond the frame of mind that looked to conditions at some future date to determine what we were to do. The Communist Party in the near future was going to be above all an active, decisive, and consciously working organism

in the Labour movement. We were not going to leave things to chance or time, but would seek to direct them in the direction we thought they ought to go so far as our Communist purposes were concerned. Industrial and educational work was suggested as an alternative to Parliamentary work, but the mass movement in the ranks of Labour could be influenced through Parliamentary activity and action. The experience of the Communist Unity group during the last election had been that the very means now suggested as an alternative to Parliamentary action had been adopted in a manner that could not have been adopted at any other period. Literature had been distributed against the League of Nations, showing the territory that the Allies were seeking to acquire. Meetings had been held in workshops and factories, delivering the Bolshevik message, and had received substantial support. The doors ought not to be closed in either the educational, industrial, or political field; all doors should be open so that we might be able to bring our Communist opinion to bear upon the mass psychology of the workers as a whole. It had been said that political leaders had betrayed the workers, and mention had been made of Henderson and Thomas. But where had these learned their treachery? They had learned it in the industrial field, and if you could not trust men in the political field, how could you hope to trust them in the industrial field? If you had no confidence to send men to the House of Commons, how could you have confidence in them to lead a strike? Although a crisis might be industrial, it might be political in essence, and, what was more, they knew that crises originating in the industrial field assumed a political character, and it was for us in a political capacity to wield that crisis for our Communist purposes. He appealed to all present, whatever decision might be come to in this matter, or any other, to subordinate these minor and secondary aspects of the movement to the fundamental principles of an active Communist Party.

The Chairman said the resolution would now be put for and against. In the event of its being carried it would be subject to amendments such as did not touch its integral character.

The resolution was put to a card vote. Cards to the number of 186, and representing 4,650 votes, were shown in its favour, while 19 cards, representing 475 votes were against it.

The Conference then adjourned.

#### EVENING SESSION.

The Conference reassembled later in the same day, the first business being the reading of further fraternal messages. These are also printed in full in Appendix B.

The following resolution was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously :—

This Communist Convention protests in the strongest terms against the massacres of Jewish Communists and Trade Unionists, carried on by the

Governments of Poland, Roumania and Hungary, and which are too often encouraged by the Allied Governments.

#### PARLIAMENTARY ACTION: ADJOURNED DISCUSSION.

The Conference then turned again to the question of Parliamentary action.

The Chairman said they had now arrived at the amendment stage. Some of the amendments that had been sent in were merely verbal, and the Convention would take first those which in some way affected the policy that had been decided upon that afternoon. The first of these was from Birkenhead. It was to delete the words "Parliamentary and electoral action," and to substitute the words, "revolutionary political action expressed in Parliamentary and municipal activities."

J. Fitton (Birkenhead Communist Group) moved the amendment, saying it was a matter of phraseology, but the resolution would be more definite if amended as suggested.

G. Hicks (B.S.P., Reading) objected that the amendment was not merely a matter of phraseology. If carried, the whole sense of the resolution would be altered.

The amendment was put and lost.

The next amendment was from the Halifax Marxian Group. It was to add the words, "and that should any Communist candidate be successful at the poll in a Parliamentary or municipal election, such candidate should not be allowed to accept the seat."

A. Waight (Halifax Marxian Group) said his Group had three reasons for moving this amendment. First, they could not conceive the Party allowing any of its members to accept a seat inside an institution which it had characterised as useless and unable to function; and, in effect, the Convention had condemned Parliamentary institutions in this manner by accepting the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat. A second point was that the amendment would test the sincerity of the Party in the resolution already passed; it would test whether political activity was to be for educational propaganda purposes or not, by laying it down that the political activity would not have any chance of taking on an opportunist character. A third point was that it took away the ground from the individual opportunist. It was all right to say, as had been said in the resolution, that a candidate, if returned, should only act upon the mandate of the Party, but the past history of men who had been successful was that they had generally turned round and refused to accept a mandate from anybody.

The Halifax amendment was then voted on and lost.

The next amendment was to delete the word "valuable" before "means of propaganda." This was agreed to without discussion.

An amendment to alter the words, "representatives of the Party elected to Parliament" to "members of the Party contesting or elected to Parliament," brought with it a little discussion. It was moved by J. Hamilton, who said that the Liverpool Com-



munist Group considered the phrasing they suggested much more expressive than that of the original resolution. By altering "representatives" to "members" they prevented an individual coming along, without being a member of the Party, and getting its support in this particular direction; and the introduction of the word "contesting" was important, because it made it explicit that the rule applied both before and after election. They had another amendment, to delete the words "according to national or local circumstances"; because they considered this phrase would give an opportunity to evade the candidate's being tied down by the resolution so far as tactics were concerned.

W. Mellor opposed the amendment, and took the opportunity to draw attention to what he considered a danger in the resolution as it stood. What was meant, he asked, by the phrase, "laid down by the Party"? Did this refer to the Party in delegate conference or to the Executive? It seemed to him that the clause as drafted would lead to centralisation of the worst possible type, endangering local initiative and setting up a bureaucracy which future conferences would be always criticising. The Convention must not accept the idea that local circumstances did not count, or, alternatively, that the people at the head office understood all local circumstances. From the head office manifestoes, leaflets, speakers, etc., could go out for ever; but unless there was a response inside the localities all such efforts would be vain. Neither the amendment nor the resolution as it stood safeguarded local life, local initiative, local control, and he asked the delegates to consider seriously whether the last two sentences of the resolution expressed what the Convention wanted. He thought the amendment should be rejected because of the deletion of the words, "according to national or local circumstances"; but there was a more vital question before them than that. They were faced with the whole question of the relationship of the local groups of the Communist Party to the Executive, and the resolution was giving the Executive an awful amount of authority. He did not think it wise for the Communist Party at its birth to begin by bureaucratising its administration.

The Chairman said he would suggest to the delegates that they were only deciding the tactical policy of the Communist Party for a few months. As he understood, when the Convention was finished, and the Provisional Executive appointed by the Convention to knock into shape the Communist Party, the first obvious duty of that Executive would be to issue a call for resolutions that would be embodied in a draft constitution that would be submitted to the Party for amendment and alteration. As he saw the situation, within a few months, the Provisional Executive must have prepared a draft constitution of some description. That skeleton would be sent out to every member of the Party in order to ascertain every point of view as to what the constitution of the Party

should be, and a later draft would be prepared for further examination and criticism. Finally this would be submitted to the membership for ratification by referendum vote of all members of the Party. So far as Mellor's fears were concerned, whatever was done now would in the end only become effective when it was ratified by the Party.

A. A. Watts said he did not think the Party could lay down to the local branches throughout the country all items of policy for their local conduct. The resolution meant that the comrade elected to a particular body would represent the Party as against the electors, and that if he went from the policy of the Party he should no longer be regarded as one of its members. Mellor had read into the resolution an entirely different meaning. A national Party could not lay down all the things that were to guide the Party throughout the country. The Party locally must decide on local affairs, and nationally on national affairs, but its members would sit on public bodies as representing the Party, not their constituents.

J. Grierson (B.S.P., Openshaw) supported the amendment. They could not have one thing in Essex and another in Northumberland, but must have a Communist Party with rigid discipline. In the B.S.P. we had seen some branches supporting Labour candidates, while others opposed them, and on one occasion Hyndman had come down to Openshaw and supported a Labour candidate in preference to a B.S.P. candidate run by the local branch. Such things would happen again if we were not careful.

A. Vandome (B.S.P., South Hackney) and R. Stewart having spoken,

H. Webb said local autonomy would lead to confusion. In the north they would have half a dozen towns in close proximity to each other, but all pursuing different policies.

Mrs. Kennedy (B.S.P., Erith) said that if local autonomy was not allowed, more damage might be done to the Communist Party than otherwise.

Miss E. Wilkinson (Manchester Guild Communist Group) said if we were going in for a revolutionary party we must have a general staff and be willing to obey it. After the revolution we could have local decentralisation. The present discussion was important, because if the Convention was laying down the lines on which the Communist Party was to be formed, and if it was got into the heads of the people who were to draft the constitution that they were to go on the same old lines, we could not have a revolutionary party, much less a revolution. A revolution meant discipline and obedience.

J. E. Thomas (Aberdare Communist Unity Group) said, on this point of rigid discipline, he would like to know how far the Conference could tie the hands of a member of a trade union who was also a member of this Party if he was run as a candidate.



F. W. Llewellyn (B.S.P., Plymouth) said he supported the amendment. He had been asked only last week to run as a Labour candidate for one of the wards in Plymouth, and had replied that he would only stand as a Communist candidate. Members of a trade union who were also members of the Communist Party must stand by their Communist principles. There was too much local autonomy now. Elections were fought on local questions, but we wanted to have them fought on the principles of the Party, and our candidates must run on a common platform.

C. L. Gibbons (Ferdale S.S.) said that No. 1 resolution had been carried unanimously, and the Convention had thereby agreed to the Soviet or Workers' Council system. A part of that system was the right of local recall—not party recall. We had agreed that Parliamentary action was subsidiary to industrial policy, and if in our Parliamentary practice we were now going back on our industrial and fundamental policy it was time we called a halt, and asked did we really believe we were assembled to declare for the Soviet system. Here we had a Communist Party claiming the right to dictate to a Communist member of Parliament what he should do. If the man was elected clearly on a Communist ticket, the people of the constituency had a clear idea of what they were doing, and under the Soviet system it was they who had the right of recall. It was going too far in paternal Government for the Party to undertake to keep the representative in order. If the man was not elected in a Communist constituency there was no point in the Party controlling him, because he would not get in unless he compromised.

T. Bell said he would like to make one or two observations on the criticisms that had been made. There was no contradiction in advocating the Workers' Council idea and determining the tactics that would be adopted once our representative was returned to the House of Commons. The Soviet idea was our alternative to Parliamentary institutions when we had achieved our revolution. We participated in local and Parliamentary elections for agitational purposes. Different localities varied from each other; in Parliamentary constituencies situations were continually arising that called for particular tactics to be adopted, always with a view to fomenting our revolutionary agitation. In the past members of Parliament had gone to the House of Commons, and, when they had got there, had divorced themselves from the Party that had sent them there. We wanted to ensure that our representatives on local and national bodies should keep in close contact with the Communist Party Executive, and that that Executive should have regard to the general situation, whether industrial or political, and should collaborate with those representatives upon the tactics that were to be adopted in order to achieve the best values so far as revolutionary agitation was concerned. It seemed to him that the movers of the amendment had no case

whatever. The Joint Committee would not quarrel about the words "members" and "representatives." Where the resolution spoke of the "Party" it meant the National Executive as appointed by the Party in Conference; provision would be made in the constitution to see that that Executive was elected in a properly constituted and democratic manner.

W. Mellor asked if there would be the same measure of control over local as over national representatives.

T. Bell replied that all the localities did not have the same degree of civic and social development as each other. There were variations of development in municipalities and so forth, and these would very largely determine the policy and tactics that would be most efficient for our propagandist purposes. That was what the Joint Committee had in mind when they used the phrase "according to local or national circumstances." Nationally, it might be, for example, a railway strike or a question of nationalising mines—some vital national question—and what the Committee had in mind was that the Executive should collaborate with the party's Members of Parliament, so as to get the greatest possible value for agitational purposes, so far as Parliamentary activities were concerned. The same thing applied locally; where there were local conditions, the Executive should have regard to those and employ tactics to get the best possible results. It was not a case of the Executive endeavouring to put up tickets for gas, water and that sort of thing, we were not concerned with questions of that sort except as subordinate to our agitational work; but wherever there were vital questions locally it should be the Executive's business to apply our Communist theory to those questions, and to advise our local members as to how they could get the greatest possible agitational value out of the circumstances. The Communist Party would have elected representatives on Parliamentary and local bodies. Supposing the Communist Party decided on a certain national line of agitational work, had not the Executive the right to expect that the members in Parliament and on the local bodies would conform to that particular policy? Suppose, for instance, the Communist Party wanted to cripple the constructive and administrative side of capitalism, and for that purpose decided that the elected members in Parliament should immediately pursue a policy of destructive tactics there, and that those tactics should be supplemented by equally destructive tactics by members of local bodies, what the resolution provided for was that in those circumstances the Executive could go to the members, state the policy of the Party, and not only ask but expect them to endeavour to put it into operation.

W. Saltmarsh (Cardiff Communist Unity Group), said it seemed to him there was a misconception underlying all this talk about amending the resolution. The misconception was

apparently that the majority of the members took parliamentary and political action seriously. As a matter of fact if they were to abide by what they had already decided they were going to treat it as a joke. If it came about that we put forward candidates he would open a book against their being returned. He recognised that the greatest part of the value of the work would be the educational side of the constituency. If by chance a candidate was returned and took his seat, he would be sitting on rotten eggs and nothing would come of it.

The amendment was then put and lost, there being 56 votes in its favour and 122 against.

The Chairman said the next amendment stood in the name of the National Branch of B.S.P., and would alter the last sentence of the resolution to read: "In all cases such representatives shall be considered as holding a mandate primarily from the Party and well as from the particular constituencies for which they happen to sit."

A. A. Purcell (B.S.P., South Salford), said it would be found on consideration that the proposed amendment fitted in with a good deal of the discussion that had taken place. It would put us in order from the point of view of the ordinary methods that are employed, and it would keep our groups in the constituencies in close touch with the Executive. In the case of certain of our members who were likely to be candidates from their own trade unions, it would give them the opportunity of remaining as trade union candidates, and, at the same time, standing as Communist candidates and voicing the principles of the Communist Party. The main point was the use of the word "primarily."

After a short discussion the amendment was lost, 52 voting in favour and 102 against.

The Chairman said there was an amendment from the Harlesden B.S.P.: "All candidates must pledge themselves to contest elections on the programme of the Communist Party, i.e., the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the Soviet or Workers' Council system." The Standing Orders Committee thought this amendment was covered in the last paragraph of the resolution. He suggested to the Harlesden B.S.P. to withdraw the amendment.

F. D. Fitzgerald (B.S.P., Harlesden), said he did not wish to withdraw the amendment. Many delegates had voiced doubts as to how the candidates of the Party could be controlled if and when they were returned. The last paragraph of the resolution did not meet the difficulty, but if the words proposed by his branch were added, making every man who stood for either local or Parliamentary election to take a pledge to fight that election on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the establishment of the Soviet system—any candidate who went to the electorate with a programme such as that, would have to fight on that



programme, and, if returned, could only voice the revolutionary attitude.

The Chairman put to the delegates the question whether the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee be upheld, and this was agreed to. The Harlesden amendment therefore dropped.

The Chairman said the next amendment was from the Openshaw B.S.P. To add the words:

“Further, that Parliamentary action shall be regarded as subsidiary to real organisation at the point of production.”

The Standing Orders Committee considered the point was covered in Resolution 1.

J. Grierson said that when Parliamentary or municipal honours were in view plain speaking at the outset was necessary. As one who considered that organisation at the point of production was the great weapon for the workers—although supporting Parliamentary action—since the national railway strike he had been more than ever convinced that the general strike was the weapon for the working class of this country to use. He had much pleasure in moving that we concentrate more than we had ever done in the past on workshop agitation, propaganda and literature—that we practically deluge the workshops of this country with literature.

The Chairman adopted the same procedure with this amendment as with the preceding one, and the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee was again accepted; so this amendment also was dropped.

The next amendment was from Cardiff to substitute the word “any” for the words “the ordinary” in the phrase “the ordinary methods of parliamentary democracy.”

W. Saltmarsh moved this. The voting was 37 in favour and 121 against, so the amendment was lost.

J. Fitton moved that words be added to the effect that all nominees enter into an obligation not to take the oath of allegiance. He said that many of the comrades in the Birkenhead Communist Group were very doubtful about Parliamentary action, and they thought that requiring an elected member not to take the oath of allegiance would prevent him ever taking his seat.

Cochran (B.S.P. Willesden) said the intention of the amendment was to sabotage any effective attempt at using Parliament as a means of propaganda. Personally, he had no scruples about taking oaths and breaking them as soon as convenient in the interest of the working class to which he belonged. The capitalist class had no scruples about making oaths and promises and breaking them immediately the so doing served their class interests. We must be prepared to be just as unscrupulous in



our efforts to win through to the revolution as they were in opposing it.

The amendment was then put to the vote and lost.

J. Fitton moved to add to the resolution the words: "In the event of any representative violating the decisions of the Party as embodied in the mandate which he or she has accepted or been instructed upon, he or she shall be called upon to resign his or her membership of Parliament or municipality and also of the Party." He said those who talked about party discipline ought to support the amendment.

A delegate seconded the amendment. He said that under the constitution of Soviet Russia the electors had the right of recall, and he thought that it was only by such means that we could control the opportunists who came along to adapt themselves in any possible way to any programme so that they could get into the House of Commons or other assembly, and when there switch themselves on to something else.

Another delegate said the point was not what we would like to do but what we were able to do. We could not recall the elected member; he was not our representative but the representative of a constituency.

The amendment was then voted upon and carried, 84 being in favour and 54 against. The resolution was then adopted as amended as follows:

"The Communist Party repudiates the reformist view that a social revolution can be achieved by the ordinary methods of parliamentary democracy, but regards parliamentary and electoral action generally as providing a means of propaganda and agitation towards the revolution. The tactics to be employed by representatives of the Party elected to Parliament or local bodies must be laid down by the Party itself according to national or local circumstances. In all cases such representatives must be considered as holding a mandate from the Party, and not from the particular constituency for which they happen to sit. In the event of any representative violating the decisions of the Party as embodied in the mandate which he or she has accepted or been instructed upon, he or she shall be called upon to resign his or her Membership of Parliament or municipality, and also of the Party."

#### TENTATIVE PROPOSALS PROVIDING FOR TRANSFORMATION INTO THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Convention then turned to the general organisation of the Communist Party, regarding which the Joint Provisional Committee made a series of "Tentative proposals providing for transformation into the Communist Party." [See Appendix C.]

The first of these asked for the election of three delegates from the Convention to act with the Joint Committee as the Provisional Executive Committee of the Communist Party. The number to be elected by the Convention was increased from three to six, and nominations were then taken.

This concluded the first day's proceedings, and the Convention adjourned.

## SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

The Convention assembled on the second day at the International Socialist Club, 28, East Road, E.C., Arthur Macmanus again presiding.

### ELECTION OF PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE.

The first business was to elect six members on the Provisional Executive Committee from the following sixteen nominations made the previous evening: George Deer, H. W. Inkpin, F. L. Kerran, C. L. Malone, M.P., W. Mellor, Mrs. D. B. Montefiore, Jas. Morton, A. A. Purcell, L. Royle, Fred. Shaw, A. Siffleet, F. B. Silvester, Jas. Stewart, R. Stewart, H. Webb and Robert Williams. By a process of exhaustive vote the following six were chosen, the figures against each name indicating the vote given on the last occasion of putting to the Convention: Geo. Deer (100 votes), C. L. Malone (106), W. Mellor (100), Mrs. D. B. Montefiore (115), Fred. Shaw (123) and R. Stewart (117).

### TELEGRAM TO THIRD INTERNATIONAL

It was next agreed to send the following telegram to the Executive Committee of the Third International at Moscow:—

“The Communist Party of Great Britain assembled in its constituent convention in London sends its warmest greetings to the Second Congress and Executive Committee of the International, and wishes them success in their glorious work. It hopes soon to join them in their march to the international proletarian revolution.”

Another telegram was sent to the delegates of the Russian Soviet Government now landed in England as follows:—

“This British Communist convention in session assembled sends hearty fraternal greetings to Comrade Kameneff and the other Russian comrades who have to-day landed in England as the first diplomatic representatives in this country of the Russian Soviet Government.”

### THE LABOUR PARTY.

The Convention then turned to the question of the relation of the new Communist Party to the British Labour Party.

The chairman said the delegates would be called upon to consider two alternative propositions: (a) That the Communist Party shall be affiliated to the Labour Party; and (b) That the Communist Party shall *not* be affiliated to the Labour Party. These propositions were very positive and substantive in their character and had been submitted in this form so that there should be no ambiguity or dubiety about the position. What was wanted was a decision as to whether or not we should go in, and he would ask the delegates who wanted us only to go half in not to intrude their half point of view until later. If the Convention decided to go into the Labour Party, the delegates could then discuss how far we should go in and what we should do when we got there. He would call first on J. F. Hodgson to speak for proposition (a), and then on W. Paul to speak for proposition (b).

J. F. Hodgson: Mr. Chairman and comrades, after the exhausting proceedings through which we have just passed, it is my very pleasant duty to introduce to you the real bone of contention, and I would like to say before I commence to speak on behalf of the B.S.P., which was and is not, that from the first in these Unity proceedings and conferences, which have been almost as exhausting as our proceedings this morning, we have always maintained the point of view that the Party itself, when formed, should be allowed to decide on this very important matter. We have never budged from that position, and when at last it was decided—as the Executive's or Party's delegates could not agree—it was decided to put the matter to the vote of a rank and file convention, it was on our proposal that that was done. Our friends on the other side accepted the proposal readily. Now I say that because I want to add that, as far as we are concerned, we are very keen on this matter, but that whichever way the vote shall go, it is our intention, even though it be against us, it shall not be the means of reducing one jot the enthusiasm and energy which we intend to put into this new Party. I call for that spirit from those who differ from us, and I want to remind you that unless we have that spirit present among us in all our proceedings as a party in the future, we are born to impotence and are likely to enter into disaster quite soon. I hope that we shall settle this matter of the Labour Party and cease these interminable discussions about it this morning—settle it one way or the other. It has been said that it is perfectly easy talking here about the Labour Party itself, because most of the delegates have come to this conference with a mandate. Well, it applies to most us; but at any rate I take this view, that we have had these discussions *ad nauseum*, and I suggest that we should try to steer clear of the old cut and dried arguments, and to see if we can strike out on a new line. We shall be assisted in that effort by certain things that have transpired quite lately. For instance, there is Lenin's book on the "Infant Disorders of the Left Communists," an interesting work which sheds a flood of light upon the whole question. Also we have had—and I want to refer to this matter first—we have had from the Left Communists a clear declaration that their policy with regard to the Labour Party is distinct from their policy towards the trade unions. It appears that we are not to join the Labour Party because that is led by trade union leaders, who have a bourgeois outlook and whose mentality is that of the middle class. Therefore we are to have nothing to do with the Labour Party. That is clear and distinct, and with regard to these same Labour leaders I would say more than that—I would say that they are the deadly enemy of the revolution which you and I are seeking. I say that these men are destined to play the part of your Scheidemanns and Noskes, and the time will



come when we shall have to deal with them in no uncertain way. Not by voting. I say that. But, comrades and friends, this same declaration proceeds to say that it shall be the duty of the branches to form Communist groups in trade union branches, and to work inside the trade union movement in that way. Now I confess that I cannot understand that. It seems to me to be a high example of confusion. Here you meet on the industrial field in the trade union certain trade union leaders. You are fully aware that whether or not through sheer rascality, duplicity and corruption they are misleading the working class. You meet them there with the intention of destroying their influence, and of winning the confidence and trust of the rank and file to that end. That is exactly the kind of tactics that I believe in. But may I remind you that you meet these same people in the Labour Party, and that you meet them on a much larger field than you do in the trade unions? We are a political Party. We meet these same trade union leaders in the Labour Party on the wider and far more important political field. That is the view I take, comrades. I repeat that I have never been able to understand that position. Many of our comrades have done important work inside the trade unions by starting unofficial committees and reform movements. This was extremely important. They have done good work in that way, but those are the very comrades who refuse to say that you could act in exactly the same way inside the political movement of the workers, which is the Labour Party. If you are going to have your Communist groups inside trade union branches, why not inside the branches of the Labour Party? If you are going to operate inside the trade union movement, why not inside the Labour Party at its annual conferences? And why not try to help in such a way that when we go to the annual conferences we shall not find ourselves, as we did at Scarborough, a little group of a dozen—and the rest reactionists, or moderates, or blind men, because the best elements in the trade union movement had not sought to get elected as delegates to the Labour Party Conference. I know there are objections to this policy. We are told, for instance, that if you affiliate to the Labour Party, and work inside the Labour Party, you become identified with the policy of the Labour Party. I deny that. I believe the best way you can illustrate the fact that you are not with the general body of opinion inside the Labour Party is to get in there and illustrate it from inside. I say that our comrades who work with the unofficial movement inside the trade union movement have done more in that way to illustrate the fact that they had a point of view which is entirely different from that of the official elements, than they could possibly have done outside. You do not become identified with the policy of the Labour Party by becoming affiliated to it or working inside. On the contrary. But the most difficult argument to understand, to



my mind, is the objection that by and by the Labour Party is going to take office; and that when it does, you will be identified with all the ruin that is going to come upon the Party once it takes office and assumes responsibilities which it cannot possibly fulfil. I do not know whether the delegates are aware of it, but this matter has been dealt with by Lenin in this latest work of his. I say this because I know that those who will oppose this resolution this morning from the point of view I am putting forward, have been accustomed in the past to refer to the example of the Bolsheviks, and always to quote Lenin as their apostle and bludgeon us in that way. We are entitled to use the same kind of bludgeon, and I would remind you that Lenin considers this kind of objection to Labour Party affiliation as one of the "infant disorders of the Left Communists." We had a talk yesterday about Parliamentary action. It is surprising to know that Lenin advises that we should take part in Parliamentary action, that we should get our members into Parliament, and that when they are in Parliament they should support the Labour Party in downing Lloyd George and Churchill, and should try and get the Labour Party into office. You should give them such support as the rope gives to the executed person. I mean to say that, after all, we have to be realists in this matter, not to live in a realm of theory but to get right down to the reality. Surely we understand that the British working class has not yet passed through the experience of having a Kerensky or a Scheidemann, and that the sooner it goes through that experience the better. We cannot assist it to go through that experience by a policy of aloofness from the working class movement. A realistic sizing up of the situation means that we must be in and out of the Labour movement all the time. But, of course, if you want to get a reputation for real revolutionary fervour you must use words like these: "Let us march straight forward, turning neither to the right nor to the left, but keeping our revolutionary principles clear and unsullied." That is the way you become a *Left* Communist because you leave your comrades behind. I make my plea this morning, in connection with the new Party, that it shall not indulge in such antics. After all, something important has happened in the world during the last few years, and that is the Russian revolution, and the experience of a proletarian revolution which you get from that; and we know that the Bolsheviks would never have won through to the triumph that they have achieved by the policy of aloofness, dogmatism, and so forth which is at rock bottom the inspiration of the antagonism to affiliation to the Labour Party. A week or two before the outbreak of the October revolution the Bolsheviks were getting ready their lists of candidates for the Duma. A fortnight, or it might have been three weeks or a month after, they abolished the Duma. That is the way to be flexible. That is the way to adapt yourself to circumstances. That is the way

to fight scientifically. That is the way to use strategy and tactics in order to win through. Of course I am talking like a Labour Fakir! "The only way in which you can win is by a frontal attack, never mind what kind of support you have got; if the battalions are small don't hesitate, go right in." I don't believe in that kind of thing; I think the longest way round is sometimes the nearest way home. I know we are working against an enemy who is very insidious in his methods. He does not use frontal attacks but flanking movements of all kinds to undermine our position. I want us to use the same kind of thing. Now, comrades, we had from Comrade Bell yesterday what, to my mind, was an extremely lucid exposition of the arguments for revolutionary parliamentary action. They were also very powerful and cogent arguments for affiliation to the Labour Party. Comrade Bell told us, and I thoroughly agree with it, that all spheres of life where working class opinion can be influenced are important. With that I steadfastly agree, but to say that, and with the next breath to advocate that we should keep outside the Labour Party, seems to me a contradiction. Inside the Labour Party we can influence working class opinion. Inside the Labour Party we can use a lever by which we can ultimately destroy the influence of the treacherous leaders of the trade union movement on the political field. Now this matter which I am presenting to you for discussion this morning is the acid test of the new Party. Never forget that. You are asked to choose between two policies, whether you will be a party which is going to live in the realm of theory, to be dogmatic, to be what is called propagandist, or whether you are going to be in and of the working class movement. It is truly said that the mission of our Party is to be the vanguard of the revolutionary working class. You cannot be the vanguard unless you are going to march with the working class—always in front, but with the working class—and I say that this Party which is living its first day of life to-day has a mission to perform of the very highest importance. I can imagine no more glorious mission than that upon which we have entered, comrades; it is to lead the British working class to victory: it is to be, as has been well said, the spear-head of the revolutionary movement in this country: it is to provide the working class with instruction, and, above all, with knowledge, with information; and the way to do that is inside the working class organisation principally. Certainly street corner meetings are good; certainly big meetings in halls are good; but the steady work of the movement is done inside the workshop, and inside the working class organisations, whether they are trade union organisations or Labour Party organisations; the idea being all the time steadily and constantly, without rest or intermission, to make inroads upon the reactionary mentality of the working class, in order to bring them to a consciousness of the revolutionary situation which will shortly be upon

us. We can never do that by the policy of aloofness which is at the back of this idea of not being affiliated with the Labour Party, and so I introduce the motion to you in that sense. I hope that we shall have a discussion which is without the sort of heat which means disagreement and mutual hatred. Let us discuss this thing in a friendly and kindly spirit, and, whichever way the vote shall go, let each of us say that we are a party, that the party has decided upon this course, and that as a loyal, earnest, devoted member of the Communist Party, he is going to carry out the decisions of the Party to the utmost of his opportunity and ability.

The Chairman called on comrade William Paul to speak to proposition (b), "That the Communist Party shall *not* be affiliated with the Labour Party."

William Paul: Mr. Chairman and comrades, we hope that we shall be able to emulate the good spirit that Hodgson has put into the debate, and we will assure him that we do not intend to use Lenin as a bludgeon. We will meet our comrade with argument. Taking the case of Lenin, it is quite true that Lenin has written a book entitled "Infant Disorders of Left Wing Communists," and I think if our comrade were to hear some of the arguments put forward by some of our moderate friends, he might be tempted to write another book on the disorders of the senile decay elements. Let that pass. There is not one in this audience to whom I yield in admiration for Lenin, but, as we said yesterday, Lenin is no pope or god. The point is that, so far as we are concerned, on international tactics we will take our international principles from Moscow, where they can be verified internationally; but on local circumstances, where we are on the spot, we are the people to decide. Not only so, but our comrade Lenin would not have us slavishly accept everything which he utters in Moscow. The very warp and woof of our propaganda is criticism, and as we believe in criticism we are not above criticising Lenin. Wherever we find our comrade Lenin speaking on points regarding the Labour Party, we should remember what our delegates from the B.S.P. said a few weeks ago in the "Call." They had to admit so far as the Labour Party and its structure was concerned, Lenin was a little vague. No doubt that is the reason why they are able to quote him this morning as they have done. Now we come to this other point, that it makes no difference what Lenin says. What our comrades who are in favour of Labour Party affiliation have to prove is their argument, no matter who says it. What is the position? Capitalism is collapsing in every one of its institutions. It is collapsing most conspicuously in the parliamentary institution, and yesterday we passed a resolution in favour of parliamentary action; but not in the spirit that our comrade Hodgson would have us imply. When we declared for parliamentary action yesterday, this conference put behind every argument in favour of



participating in parliamentary action, this fact—that we believe in parliamentary action for the express and decisive purpose of destructive and agitational work. The Labour Party does not believe in that conception of parliamentary action; the Labour Party believes in parliamentary action as a constructive weapon in the working class movement, and in so far as the two functions are diametrically opposed they cannot be mixed, and he who will mix them is going to put himself in the delightful position of the acrobat who tries to stand on horses running in different directions. Not only are the two functions diametrically opposed in regard to parliamentary action, but it is not two functions only, it is two principles. It is the principle of the Second International, to which it is logically affiliated, which is the principle of the Labour Party; whereas we stand on the other side in favour of the Third International; who use the parliamentary weapon for destructive and agitational purposes. Hodgson made a good point. He said that we have got to understand that we are dealing with an enemy who is keen, that this enemy has only two methods of trying to beat us down; that he tries to meet us with a brutal frontal attack, which he does not care to begin on just at once, until he has exhausted another method. That other method is the method of compromise, the flank movement or camouflage. Where do we stand? We find that the British ruling class in this country, above all classes, has made its inroads, has opposed every movement of revolt in this country, not by a fair frontal attack, but by the insidious and slimy method of trying to get underneath it, and thereby to eradicate it. We have to realise that the capitalist class, economically living by swindling, also hopes to live and maintain its class rule by politically swindling us. Jeremy Diddlers alike on the economic and political fields, the capitalist class internationally—in every country where there has been a crisis—the position has been that confronted with the crisis they did not first of all try to smash the revolutionary class, but tried to gather the moderate elements, to compromise with them and to throw the responsibility of diddling the working class upon those elements. Therefore you find that in Russia—and Hodgson admitted that he hoped for it very quickly here—when the crisis took place it automatically produced Kerensky, and, when Kerensky could not solve the problem, Korniloff. The same thing applied in Germany. With the crisis Scheidemann and Noske were called into being, and behind that came the assassination of Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht. In France, during the period of crisis, there were brought into being the Albert Thomases, Briands, Millerands. We find the same thing in Italy. The middle class look to this Party which will mislead the working class. So, in America, your Spargos and Hillquits were called statesmen while Eugene Debs was put into gaol. Come to Britain. We find here that the crisis is going to produce exactly the same results.



We can go back to 1914, and what was it that the capitalist class was afraid of in 1914 when they declared their war? It was the working class. It was this working class political expression; and it was this Parliamentary Labour Party that let the working class treacherously down. Our friends say you can easily explain this. You can if you are trained in the subtle method which our friends revel in, but the working class do not possess the subtle method. They judge us by the company we keep, and in the moment of crisis, when the indignant masses rise to sweep the Labour Party away, we may be swept away too. We shall be swept away, too; because, when we tell the working class that we knew this all the time, but that we were playing a long game called tactics, the working class will not understand those methods of dissimulation. The working class will say, "If you knew and did not tell us, you ought to be damned thirty times over." We find that in 1914, when the crisis took place, it was the Labour Party that let the working class down. Even when they wanted some slimy individual to come along and diddle the soldiers out of their pensions, the Labour Party produced Mr. John Hodge. That is why to our friends of the anti-parliamentary group yesterday, when they told us the fight was ineffectual in Gorton, we said it was not ineffectual in so far as it helped to expose Hodge. If this vote for affiliation to the Labour Party is carried we shall not be able to fight and expose Hodge. We shall be tied down. The same thing is true in regard to food control. Food control has become the capitalist class method of blockading the working class during a strike. When the South Wales miners exposed Rhondda to whom did the capitalist class look? Was it not to J. R. Clynes? Now we are at the point of success in this country so far as building up a Left Wing revolutionary movement is concerned, we shall find that the capitalist class will become ever more intent in trying to diddle us, ever more intent to try and win us into the Labour Party, in order to try and disarm us. Our friend tells us we ought to be in the Labour Party because that is where the working class is, but if our friend goes to anti-Socialist demonstrations or conferences, these claim to represent the working class, and every argument he can put forward to show why we ought to be affiliated to the Labour Party can be applied to joining the Salvation Army. You will find then that we have got to build up our own organisation, that we have got to set out our own code of tactics, and that we have got to develop these—not that we shall be so much Left that the battalions will be left behind. What battalions will be left behind? When the crisis comes the battalions to be left behind will be the Labour Party, and the further we are away from the Labour Party, then the better for us. Comrade Hodgson, in the argument he was putting forward was impelled to say, despite himself, the way the fight can be fought by us, when he

inadvertantly admitted that it was in the workshop; and, although we believe in parliamentary action, we have shown that its function is of a destructive character, and, if you like, we can point out when the crisis comes, and the Labour Party is exposed, and the vortex of revolution, instead of sweeping us into the Labour Party and downing us—at that moment we can tell the working class we were opposed to these people, and that in every demand for higher wages we were in every one of these struggles. Therefore the working class will be compelled to look to us, and will come our way, because they will see that right through all the struggles we were the people who stood with the weapon clean in our hand in the Communist Party, and refused to violate fundamental principles by joining the Labour Party and indirectly joining the Second International. In this fight our friends may imagine, if this demand is carried, to attract certain elements to the Communist Party. But we tell you that the elements attracted by passing the Labour Party affiliation clause will repel the people we want. The Communist Party, now, let it begin clean. Let it rise up strong. We have realised during the past that all the great vigour and enthusiasm of our movement has been throttled by compromise. Let us throttle that spirit now. Let us build up the Communist Party and carry on its own work, merged in all the struggles of the masses. In that way we can reach the working class—but not by hauling our colours down and joining hands with Thomas and Coy. who will ultimately betray us.

The Conference adjourned for lunch. On returning, it first occupied itself with some questions as to the order of procedure, limiting the number of speakers on each side, etc. The Chairman stated that there could not be any new arguments brought forward at the Convention, but new elements were present, and it was desirable that every delegate should feel that the subject had been thoroughly debated. He proposed to throw the matter open for general discussion and get a definite decision as to whether the Convention was in favour of affiliation of any sort; after which amendments would be in order so that they might find out how far they would affiliate.

George Deer (B.S.P., Rawtenstall) said he supported affiliation. Comrade Paul had stated that when the Labour Party with its constructive programme, as against our destructive programme, was swept aside, we should be swept aside with it and the working class would say, "You who did not tell us when you knew, are doubly or trebly damned." But he (Deer) wanted to suggest to the Conference that the only possible chance we had of showing the workers that our viewpoint was different from that of the Labour Party was by remaining inside and fighting them upon their own battle ground. Mr. Jas. Sexton had made this comment at Scarborough a few weeks ago: "Here is the B.S.P., with ten thousand alleged members, paying £50

a year affiliation fees. They monopolise the Conference, get five speakers on the first day, demand a bloody revolution and Jim Thomas's head upon a charger, and then foist Malone upon us. What the hell do they want for fifty quid?" If there was any case for affiliation to the Labour Party, out of the mouth of Sexton we had that case. We knew our case and could state it, and he (the speaker) emphatically denied that there was any possibility of our being mistaken as being either of them or with them. When the cry was raised in Russia of "All power to the Soviets," what happened? Lenin wanted to get power out of the existing organisations, and his fight was with the reactionists who were inside those organisations. Our fight was with the same kind of people here, and to leave the workers to be gulled with the clap-trap of Clynes, or the tomfoolery of Thomas was simply playing into their hands. He would suggest that the people most interested in the present debate were those who controlled the caucus at the Labour Party office. If we wanted to give the reactionists joy we should leave them. After we had gone they would say, "Thank God we have got rid of that element; now we will have quiet, peaceable and happy times." Another point was that if we left the Labour Party there was great danger of people who did not take our viewpoint posing as the Left Wing within the Labour Party. It had only been our attitude at Scarborough that had unmasked the MacDonalds, Hills and the rest who were posing as the Left Wing. It would interest those present to know that while they accepted John Hill as Vice-President of the Hands Off Russia Committee, and agreed with him over industrial action so far as Russia was concerned, in negotiations on the standing orders of the Labour Party Conference no man had tried to sabotage us more than he. We had to remain with these people in order to fight them. Comrade Paul had made a statement that to talk of going to the Labour Party because they represented the working class was on a line with talking of going to the Salvation Army. But if we could not force our way, or dominate the position, with the people who saw that something was wrong with the existing social order, whom were we going to influence? The millions of votes cast for the Labour Party at the last General Election were votes given mainly by people who were dissatisfied, but did not quite know what they wanted. These were the people we had to show the way to; if we could not win them we could not win anyone. We should retain our Communist identity inside the Labour Party, but what we should do would be this: Inscribed on the Soviet banner were a sickle and a hammer as symbols of the revolution. Let us see that we unceasingly carried out our task, until such time as the Labour Party became a Labour Party with a Communist mind—and this could be done, for what we said to-day our Labour leaders would have to say to-morrow---and inscribed on the La-



bour Party banner were the sickle and the hammer of the Communist movement.

C. L. Gibbons (Ferndale S.S.) opposed affiliation to the Labour Party, saying that the speech just made had given him plenty of material to back up his case. One thing which was evident from that speech was that its maker believed the Labour Party could do constructive work; that was the belief of those who yesterday had supported political action. But we knew that it could not do constructive work, and that our one ambition as active Labourists and Communists was to show the workers that it could not do active constructive work. What had been our success up till now in that direction? He would give his own experience in his own locality. There the Labour Party was in power; it was not fighting for power but had a big majority on the District Council. It was discrediting itself every day, and if it was a Communist District Council it would discredit itself even more. What was happening? Every section of the working class at Rhondda, after working for the municipality, had been on strike against it during the last twelve months. That fact had done more to discredit the Labour Party in the eyes of the workers of Rhondda than anything we could do either inside or outside. Even people who were not Communists were saying there was nothing in the Labour control of municipalities. Were delegates from that district to go back and say to such people, "Having reached this point by your own observation, now try and believe there is something in it"? It could not be done; they dare not. In his own lodge there were three district Councillors, two members of the Board of Guardians and two J.P.'s. One had resigned because he refused to carry out his mandate; another had refused to carry out his mandate but had remained in office. Some of the elected members saw that everything they did had to be reactionary in order to maintain their position, others were beginning to shake in their shoes because their pay was being stopped in consequence of their not being able to do what they were told to do. Communists in the Rhondda had been telling the people all along, "If you go in and get control of the municipal and parliamentary machinery nothing will come of it, except that you will discredit your own case," and he and other delegates from that district dare not go back and tell the people there to go into the Labour Party. He asked the delegates to look at the question from that point of view, not what would it entail in a general sense but what would it entail upon them to-morrow. They would go back and have to take part in the whole of the Labour Party action if we became affiliated to that Party. The Labour Party might perform the miracle of accepting Communist candidates, but it would not accept all Communist candidates, and they would be pledged to support every candidate put forward by the Labour Party. If they did not they would be kicked outside that Party; if they



did they ought to be kicked outside the Communist Party. Delegates from the Rhondda dare not go back and tell the people there to continue to support what was already discredited, and everybody else at the Conference would find himself in that position. The Labour Party had not got power in some districts, in others it had; wherever it got power it would become discredited, and the best thing for us was to recognise that fact before attempting to get control under circumstances where so doing would only discredit our case.

F. L. Kerran (B.S.P., Central London) said he thought the last speaker had given really the best towards guiding us to the right conclusion; he had given an excellent description of what was going to be the future of the political Labour Party in this country. He had described to us what had happened in Rhondda. He had told us that the Labour Party there had actually got the majority, and had failed in their local Council, and that that Labour Council had become thoroughly discredited. What was going to be the result of that? When the workers found out that the Labour Party was no damned good to them, they would then overthrow the Labour Party. But it was our business first of all to help the Labour Party get into office, and then, when they had got into office, our first act was to kick them out. When all was said and done we were really wasting our time in discussing this subject. We were discussing tactics, but what have we to do with tactics? In so far as we were concerned, we were a few individuals trying to form a general staff without an army. Our work in the future was to go on educating enough people to agree with us. When we have enough of the men behind us we would consider tactics. Comrade Paul said that the revolution was coming soon. He (Kerran) sincerely hoped it was not; if we were going to be the people to guide the revolution in the strength we were to-day it was a very bad look out for us. Our friend told us that he favoured parliamentary action. If he favours parliamentary action he must mean that when he runs a man for Parliament he means that man to get in. To get in he must get votes. Surely the Labour Party were the type of people that he should appeal to in order to get those votes. If the Labour Party got a majority they would not be able to run the industries of the country from Whitehall together with the present governmental machinery. They would have to adopt some kind of council system. This seemed so plain to him that he could not understand how anybody could think otherwise.

W. Mellor asked those delegates who had not come with mandates that could not be broken again to look at this question without any heat, to look at it from the point of view of expediency. We were not a collection of Machiavellis. We were a collection of people who disliked the Labour Party, and had very grave doubts as to whether modern trade unionism

was the thing we were particularly keen upon. But we were inside the capitalist system, inside every manifestation of that system, and one of those manifestations was Parliament. The Labour Party—meaning thereby not the Parliamentary Labour Party, but the federation of trade unions, Socialist societies, local Labour parties and co-operative societies—was a manifestation of the desire of the working class to take advantage of the parliamentary system. It was a collection of the various aspects of the Labour movement on its industrial or consuming side, coming together to express in a political view certain desires and aspirations. The desires and aspirations of the present Labour movement were something of which he had nothing to say, they were miles behind the things that we were aiming at; but they were the things for which the workers of this country were asking. We had to recognise that the revolution would not come unless we could get assent not to our principles, but to our tactics from the organised workers; that to be successful in our efforts to change society we must be in strategic positions. Those positions were to be found inside the pit, inside the railway station and railway car, and also inside the places where those men alongside whom we worked tried to express their political aspirations. He had no defence for the Labour Party, and nothing to say for most of its leaders, as they were called. But if we as a Communist Party, beginning our career, cut ourselves off from the political expression of the Labour movement of this country, without having examined whether the time had arrived to do so, we should rue the step. He did not say the time would not come when it would be necessary to cut ourselves off; but at present we were a few thousands among 45 million people, looking for platforms, places where we could make a move and exert an influence, somewhere where we could get underground, and, as the delegate had said yesterday, "shift the stone." Those places were given in the present organisation of Labour. Our job was not to defend the Rhondda Labour members, but to point out to the working class in Rhondda that this was the sort of thing they were getting and were going to get. Equally our job was to see that any strategic position that was going was ours and that we were on the spot to get hold of it. Take those wonderful congresses that met at intervals, known as special trade union congresses. They did nothing. The Labour Party conferences passed resolutions but did nothing. But every time one of these congresses met it got together a number of people on whom we could play, and our business as a Communist Party was to get inside and play hell. But we should play hell properly; not by waving a red flag, but by analysing and criticising the attitude of the people who were trying to lead. We should play hell in such a way that our words must go home, not in such a way that they would be laughed out of court. We must use every instrument there

is. Would anyone here suggest that we should not take advantage of a wage strike if a wage strike comes? Would anyone here suggest we should not take advantage of any reformist movement inside the working class and use it for our own ends? Or that we should cut ourselves adrift as individuals from the trade union movement to which we belong? He did not think there was. If you agreed that we have got to work through the industrial organisation, we must take that industrial organisation as we found it; and it had got two sides. It had its industrial side and it had its political side. Both those sides could be used by us, and, unless we were here to use everything given us, unless we were here to take chances that other people do not see, we should not have a Communist Party at all. We should go away, become a disgruntled people standing on orange boxes and talking of revolution. Our job as a Communist Party was to get that revolution. The material we have got, we know it; we have worked alongside of it, meet it in "pubs," meet it in chapel sometimes some of us. But we met it and know what it is, and we could not afford at the very beginning and creation of a revolutionary party in this country to lose the chance of taking advantage of every machine that the Labour movement had created.

G. Roberts said that for twelve years he had been a most active opponent of affiliation to the Labour Party, at the period when it was most unpopular to advocate separation from it. He had had the unenviable reputation of opposing the godheads of the Social Democratic Party, and been threatened with expulsion because of his views. He still believed that at that time he was right. He believed that so long as the Socialist movement had reflected itself purely and simply as an educational institution, a huge national debating society, he had been right in opposing Labour Party affiliation. Much water had flowed beneath the bridges since that time; he now believed that we were on the verge of a revolutionary situation, and he realised that the people who would be instrumental in the first instance in bringing about a revolutionary situation were those people who attended football matches, race meetings, picture palaces and theatres; and who did not give one moment's thought to the problems facing them either at the moment or in the future. Because of the almost sub-conscious urge of the heterogeneous mass that we had to deal with, he believed we must be part and parcel of the working class itself. Comrade Paul had said that if we were to go where the working class were we might find them in the Salvation Army or the anti-Socialist Union. But the policy of those organisations was not dictated by the organised industrial working class; and the reason why we depended on the organised workers, and did not trouble about the heterogeneous mass that was unorganised, was because through the organisation industrially of the working class we could get a



decisive expression officially of the ideas of those workers who had been forced to organise as a consequence of the encroachment of the capitalist system on their means of existence. As a propagandist he could denounce Clynes, Thomas and others at the street corner; but affiliated to the Labour Party he could denounce them face to face and in the place where they had influence.

F. Barber (B.S.P., Southwark) opposed affiliation to the Labour Party from personal experience of the Labour Party. He and other members of the Southwark B.S.P., as it was then, stood as Labour candidates at the last Borough Council election. They got in and were by this time disgusted absolutely by the policy and action of the Labour Party. That was a fact. The leader of the local Labour Party was at one time a member of the B.S.P. Further than that, he claims still to be a revolutionary Socialist. But he was a freemason and he had also influenced other members of the Labour and Socialist Parties on that Council to become freemasons. He (the speaker) put it to the delegates that the freemasons were not a revolutionary section. He believed, the same as the majority of the delegates here, in using the industrial weapon to bring about the emancipation of the workers, but, at the same time, we must recognise that when the workers are out for an increase, or to better their conditions, their request should be to a certain extent respected; and when we have men who were in the employ of a Council where the Labour Party was in the majority, having to threaten a strike before they got their way, it makes them sick of the Labour Party to a certain extent. For these reasons he was utterly opposed to the Labour Party and affiliation with the same.

W. P. Coates (B.S.P., Leeds) supported affiliation with the Labour Party. He said he did so for many reasons, but first because of the experience of the Irish Labour movement. Prior to becoming an organiser for the B.S.P. he had been for a few years a district organiser of the Irish Transport Workers' Union. In 1907 the Irish Trade Union Congress had been even more reactionary than the English Trade Union Congress, but in 1908 Connolly had been brought back from America. When he came back one of the things he said in Dublin to O'Brien and the others was, "Men, I made a mistake in the past when endeavouring to build up a Socialist Party in Ireland outside the existing working class movement"; and it was Connolly who, two years later, moved at the Irish Trade Union Congress that that Congress should form a Labour Party, not a Socialist Party. In 1911 that Party had been formed, and the men who composed the first Executive were thorough-going reactionists in the majority of cases; but our people had set to work, inside that Labour Party, to get rid of those men. When war broke out in this country, when the strategical positions had not been captured by the Left Wing, the Labour Party went on



the recruiting platform. Precisely the same request was made to the Irish Labour leaders, to go on the recruiting platform, and the older men, the reactionaries, would have supported Redmond and Dillon in the recruiting campaign, were it not for the fact that twelve months previously our people had captured most of those positions. He believed that what had been done in Ireland could be done here.

G. Deacon (Unofficial Communist Group within the "Herald" League—Northern Division) said he opposed affiliation. A little statement had been made during the course of the discussion, and had been passed over lightly, but nevertheless had some bearing on the attitude of delegates or the branches that had sent them. He referred to the suggestion that had been made that one advantage in affiliating to the Labour Party was that votes would accrue therefrom. He had a suspicion that this consideration loomed far more largely than it should do in the discussion; but that sort of thing was too petty to enlarge upon. He hoped the Communist Party in deciding, as they had done yesterday, to engage in parliamentary action, would have the propaganda idea first in mind, not that of the vote. Many present had come to the Convention having made up their minds or having had their minds made up for them by the branches, and he had come definitely opposed to the Labour Party. As a matter of fact, despite the central organisation being affiliated the branch he represented had always been against it. Nevertheless, he had endeavoured to see what arguments there were that might change his mind, if not his vote, and he had noticed that there was, as he thought, a misconception as between affiliation to the Labour Party nationally and using the material within the Labour Party. It seemed to him that men whom he had credited with keen intellects, had glossed over that point without seeing it, but he contended that it was not a subtle point merely for rhetoricians; there was an important difference. He firmly believed that we need not affiliate to the Labour Party, but could make use of the material presented, and he hoped we were going to do that. It had been said that affiliation to the Labour Party did not necessarily mean that we identified ourselves with the Labour Party, but he denied that; we could not affiliate to the Labour Party nationally without the bulk of the working class thinking we were with the Labour Party—and we were not with it. Further, he believed that we should have to make up our minds that sooner or later the gulf would be wider between us; even in a few months' time we might have to sever ourselves. He said: Do it now; take courage in both hands; say that we are different. He believed that every man and woman present believed the Communist Party to be different from the Labour Party. He had put in an amendment, and, if the decision was against affiliation, he hoped to move that amendment later on; because one of the reasons why he was against affiliation to the

Labour Party was because he believed we had not merely the two alternatives presented on the agenda.

F. Willis (B.S.P., Willesden) said he could assure Deacon that the Communist Party, whether affiliated to the Labour Party or not, was and would be a different party from the Labour Party. In this connection, another misapprehension had occurred in the speech of one of the delegates, who had pointed out that the Labour Party believed in constructive action under capitalism whereas the Communist Party believed in destructive action. That was the point. We knew that the Labour Party believed in constructive action, and so did the great mass of the organised working class who supported it; but he contended that, although the Labour Party's action might be on constructive lines, the activity of the Communist Party inside the Labour Party might be destructive. It might be just as destructive as the B.S.P. had been, and he contended that throughout its affiliation to the Labour Party the B.S.P. had been destructive in all its tactics. Let them examine the matter as dispassionately as they could. The trade union movement had grown up in this country as the industrial expression of the working class movement. Afterwards it had been found necessary to have a political expression of the working class movement in this country, and out of the trade union movement had grown the Labour Party as the political expression of that backward, reactionary and stupid mass upon which we had to work. He remembered the time in the Socialist movement when discussions quite as vehement as these on affiliation to the Labour Party took place on the question as to whether it was the business of Socialists to join the trade unions; and when exactly the same arguments were advanced against Socialists becoming members of trade unions as were now advanced against the Communist Party becoming affiliated to the Labour Party. In those days it used to be said, and said truly, that the trade union was the expression of an institution that had grown up out of capitalism, that all the trade unions were after was an increase of wages and a decrease of hours; and that was true to-day. But what was lost sight of by those who spoke thus was the fact that these same trade unions were the institutions that had grown up out of the class struggle to voice the demands of the workers. Just as the trade unions had grown up so had the Labour Party. He wanted to bring to the notice of the Convention the Marxian practice. About 1864 Marx had come to this country to influence the working class here, and had endeavoured to get a point of contact with the working class. He did not go to the people convinced of his own views, but to George Odger, Benjamin Lucraft and Robert Applegarth—all of them as British and as reactionary as Thomas or Clynes or any that could be named. Why had Marx worked with them? Because he knew that he had to get into contact with every organisation and institution

that grew up out of the working class. This was the final argument from Marxian practice and was all in favour of affiliation.

H. Webb said an important point had been made that the Bolshevik contact at the time of the Menshevik majority was identical with the proposed point of contact by affiliation with the Labour Party. But he denied that there was any analogy; for the very simple reason that the Soviet was an organisation that was bound to be in all countries the governmental machine, whereas the Labour Party was an organisation and an institution that was bound to be destroyed. There was a vital difference there. With regard to the statement made by Comrade Mellor, that here we had institutions manifested within capitalist society, and that we must bore within all those institutions, it was not so much a question of boring; the point at issue was the point of contact. The capitalist armed forces were a manifestation so far as an institution was concerned within capitalist society, but would it be said that we should bring about a point of contact by affiliation with a capitalist army? We had to take into account that historical forces disintegrated institutions, and those forces, after disintegrating institutions brought about a gravitation of disintegrated forces towards the organisation that was going to be the guide for the revolutionary workers. Another point to be touched upon was that it was not so much a question of the numerical strength of the individuals that formed an institution; the point was as to the character of the weapons they wielded—their historic value and the function they had to perform. With regard to affiliation to the Labour Party from the point of view of the Second and Third Internationals, Thomas had declared on October 5th, last year, that when it was a question of a Soviet war, the one thing more important than another was not the victory but an honourable settlement for both sides. Imagine a Communist going down to the revolutionary nucleus in the workshop and saying, "You must assist this particular element to get hold of the governmental machinery, so that they may be a shield for the capitalist class; just as Tsereteli, Tchernoff and the rest of them were in the early period of the revolution in Russia." It was not essential to be connected with the Labour Party in order to develop a point of contact with the working class; the Labour Party was not the working class political expression. It was a working class institution with a definite function to perform, wedded to parliamentarism and reaction; consequently we must keep ourselves clear of it, and, when the disintegration came, when the British Labour Party had used the effete machinery of Parliament—which it would eventually do—we should, as a clean Communist Party attract those elements to a policy not of smashing institutions, but of ignoring those that had become historically effete.

R. Page Arnott (Guild Communist Group) said the answer to Webb's point about affiliation to a capitalist army was perfectly



obvious; in countries where there had been conscription for years—Russia and elsewhere—it was the conscripts in the capitalist army that had brought it crashing down. The question of affiliation to the Labour Party was not nearly so important as that of our activity in the workshops, our industrial activity in building up a working class organisation at the point of production. But though not so important it was a point to be considered carefully, and with a full sense of what the actualities were. It had been suggested in the debate that it would be impossible for us to be inside the Labour Party. Karl Liebknecht had remained for years inside the German Social-Democratic Party—a Party far worse in many ways than our Labour Party and with a discipline much stronger. But would anyone contend that his position was not understood? Everyone knew that Liebknecht stood apart from Scheidemann, and as far back as 1903 everyone knew what Liebknecht's attitude would be in the war. We must not confuse the British Labour Party with continental parties. Where they are close it is loose, where they have a definite reactionary policy the Labour Party has a wobbling policy. We could affect and influence it in a way that the comrades on the Continent could not do. Yet they were willing for a time to remain inside. That was the point, it was for a time. We had to realise that the moment in Britain had not yet come when we were able to go out, as they did in other countries, and split definitely off. That moment would only come when we were perfectly sure that in splitting off from the Labour Party we could take a very large number of the organised working class with us. We must consider that as tactics in a military sense—consider this class war as people in the position of leading and directing towards the revolution. We have to take the same dispassionate outlook as a general has to do. It did not matter whether a general was or was not a furious anti-German, his business was to think the thing out coldly and clearly and to get rid of emotion. It would be noticed that afternoon that, on the whole, the emotional arguments were put forward by the opponents of the Labour Party. When comrade Paul spoke he (Arnot) felt strongly against the Labour Party. Other speakers said they were sick of the Labour Party. That was it, we were all sick of the Labour Party, and everybody there felt a response when the speaker said he was sick of the Labour Party, and that therefore we should cut loose. That was where the mistake came. The fact that we were sickened of the Labour Party, that it was a hard task to work inside it, and that it was a much finer thing personally to feel that we were free of the thing, did not mean necessarily that leaving the Labour Party was the best tactic for the revolution. We might have to go on doing things that would nearly break our hearts before we got the revolution; but what we have in mind was the revolution and not the saving of our hearts.

W. Hill (Oldham Communist Unity Group) said one thing we were overlooking in our discussion of affiliation with the Labour Party, was what would be the effect upon us as a Communist Group if we did affiliate? He would tell them what took place in his town last November at the municipal election. The Labour Party put up a candidate in one of the wards who had been working in the stores during the time that the co-operative workers were on strike for a living wage. Can we support a man of that description in his attitude in asking for the people's suffrage to send him to the council or Parliament? If we were affiliated we should be compelled to do so. It was all right delegates saying "No, no!" he had for many years in his town been fighting these men. They had been affiliated. He had been a delegate on the Executive there and knew what it meant. When the local council puts a candidate up we have to pledge ourselves to support that man. If we affiliated to the Labour Party we should be in a position of inutility as a Party. We should not be able to expose the actions of the past nor the purposes of the future in regard to candidates. If we were affiliated we must be loyal to the Party, and how could we be loyal or apply for affiliation to a Party with a constitution such as the muddled constitution of the Labour Party? Personally, he was strongly opposed to affiliation to a party of that description, for the reason that it was not practical politics; and what he and his group stood for was that when these men were put up for a local council or Parliament, we should be able to put up a candidate in opposition to them; not in order that our candidate might be returned, but so as to expose what these men had done in the past. Take Clynes. If we were affiliated to the Labour Party how could we expose to the people that he gave £5,000,000 to the farmers—the pets of the Government—and all the other facts of the past six years? Circumstances might alter in the future, but for the present the Convention ought to turn down any affiliation with the Labour Party.

T. J. Watkins (Trethomas Communist Unity Group) said he opposed affiliation to the Labour Party. In so doing he was fully conscious of the arguments that had been brought up on the other side, but saw nothing in these that could by any means touch the real thing involved. What he was concerned about was this; it had been said that we were sick of the Labour Party, but that was not the case; it was the Labour Party that was sick and we did not want to get contaminated. The Labour Party was not the rank and file of the working class movement. For the last ten years he did not remember missing a general meeting of the colliery at which he worked, and he had never yet known the agenda of the Labour Party, or anything connected therewith to come before one of those general meetings. If we were to get at the Labour Party it was the rank and file that we wanted to get at, and where were we to get at the rank and

file? In the workshop? What were we to tell them? If we were to tell them what comrade Paul had advised us to tell them they would be equally confused as with what the other people wanted us to tell them. The worker was only concerned with what we put forward so far as he understood it, and it would be hugely difficult for us to persuade him that these lines of tactics were really essential to bringing about the thing we all so desired. It was impossible to have one line of action as a producer and another as a consumer, as Mellor had proposed. All these things tended to show that the line of action on the political field must be that of taking a complete separation from the Labour Party. It was no use attempting to camouflage things with the working class.

H. Stubbs (Shop Stewards, Birmingham Committee) said that our activities in the workshops had been very much discussed; he would say that the only party who could discuss these activities were the shop stewards, and he would like to add that these did not wish the Labour Party to give them any advice upon the matter. Nor did they want that of the organisers. He personally thought the working class movement and the Labour Party were in opposition, and he maintained that they should be kept in opposition; because the workers understood that they were being fobbed, and they wanted a way out. The new era was the way out. The Chairman had said the delegates had been waiting two years for this glorious week-end. For two years they had been pecking away at a very hard shell to be hatched to breathe the fresh air. Were they to go back from the Conference affiliated to the Labour Party, to tell the workers that the Communist Party was still-born? He had come to the conclusion that our activities were perfect through the shop steward movement; now that it was sanctioned that we should go into the political field, he asked that it should be on a straight basis.

Mrs. Bamber (East Liverpool B.S.P.) opposed affiliation. She had had a very painful experience during the last twelve months of working inside the Labour Party as city councillor. If we affiliated to the Labour Party it would certainly mean that we owed a certain loyalty to the party we affiliated to. If we affiliated with the object of having our views more clearly stated inside she believed we should adopt the wrong policy. She was returned practically on a Bolshevik propaganda policy, and could have been returned without the aid of the Labour Party; but, since she had been in the Labour Party, not one suggestion that she brought forward in a group of twenty had ever seen the light of day in the City Council. If we wanted to bring our views forward as Communists, or class conscious Socialists, our place was as free agents outside the Labour Party, and not inside it. If we believe in political action—she was not very sure that political action was the right action at the present moment—but if we agree with political action the only possible chance



that we, as Socialists, have of forcing the right point of view on the working class is outside the contamination of the Labour Party on every subject that we have touched. Last week—on the question of recruiting—the Lord Mayor was asking the Labour Party to help in recruiting. What ought we to say as Socialists on the question of recruiting? She was the only person to propose—and she could not get a seconder in the party—that they should send back to the Lord Mayor a reply that, seeing that the soldiers were always used to help the capitalist class, for that reason they could not support recruiting. But no. Half a dozen excuses from the Labour Party because they believed vote catching was much more important. We want the best out of the Communist Party, we want our views brought clearly to the front; that, she believed, was what the people who supported affiliation were anxious for. They believed we could get it best through the Labour Party; she believed we could get it best stated outside. The industrial workers were sick to death of the position of the Labour Party at the present time, and she hoped that we, the Communist Party, showing the way not to reform but to the emancipation of the workers, would keep outside the Party that had done so much to delay the progress of the working class during the last few years.

L. Royle (B.S.P., Sheffield) opposed our having anything whatever to do with the Labour Party. He had been something like thirty years in the Socialist movement, and he recognised to-day what a serious blunder he had made something like twenty-five years ago in the old I.L.P., when he fought for being connected with the Labour Party. He had been enamoured of the Labour Party for a year or two, but from then until now he had been fighting like grim death to get out of it. He now saw how we had been throttled with it. He noticed that no speaker who got up to advocate affiliation with the Labour Party had a kind word to say for it. One speaker had said we should play upon the Labour and Trade Union Congresses, but he would reply that they played upon us; they were all of no use or value. He knew that many present feared the new Party would lose membership if it was not affiliated to the Labour Party; but he was confident we should have a tremendous influx of members if we would only fight straight. There was nothing the working man detested more in his rock bottom nature than a crooked fight. He (Royle) did not want to go before the public to advocate a crooked fight, but when he advocated they should fight straight he could get them with him every time. One other point. Why build up a Labour Party when we knew that the time would come when we should have to smash it? The Labour Party owed its existence and its power to having been built up by Socialists. Let the Left Wing of the Socialist movement come out of it, and it would tumble down like a house of cards. It was useless and we should not prop it up any longer.

A. Angel (B.S.P., Central) said the Convention had assembled to establish a Communist Party with the object in view of abolishing the capitalist system and introducing, as far as he understood, a Soviet Republic such as existed in Russia now. Yesterday the Convention had passed a resolution adhering to the Third International, of which he was very glad, but he had thought that all Communists had long since adhered to the Third International. We had been told by the Chairman that we were two years late in starting the Communist Party; he had thought we were many years late; and now we were going to destroy our work in the very minute of building it up. By affiliating with the Labour Party we should destroy to-day what we had built up yesterday. It was affiliating with the Second International, with the people now at Geneva who called themselves "representatives" of the proletariat of Britain; but who had treacherously betrayed the workers of this and other countries, and had helped to massacre such people as Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxembourg and Jaurès. We had affiliated to the Third International, and now we were affiliating to the Second International. If we wanted to remain a pure and simple Communist Party we should remain outside the Labour Party, and if we wanted to do something for our class and ourselves we could do it on the industrial field; but never inside the Labour Party. We had been cadging for votes many years too long; we should try to get direct action.

R. Nicolai (Coventry Communist Unity Group) said that speaking also as a shop steward, he must agree with Stubbs. In time of crisis in the workshop many of the comrades present—Mellor, Paul and others—were out of it; but he was in it. In such a time whom did the workers come to? Trade union branches? Labour Party people? Not likely. The shop steward was the man. He contended that we could build up an organisation apart from the Labour Party, i.e., the Shop Steward movement. Provided we could get a sufficient leavening of class conscious shop stewards and others inside the workshops, Labour Party affiliation need not bother us.

L. Manoin said he was a member of the B.S.P., but had seen no good results from its affiliation with the Labour Party. At the present time, in Sheffield, no matter how good a Socialist a man might be, he was mobbed if at any Socialist or trade union meeting he said he was in favour of such affiliation. It was human nature for the men sent to Parliament to consider their own bread and butter. They knew if they came back to their own class there was no provision made for them, so they went over to the capitalist class.

Fred Shaw supported affiliation to the Labour Party. He did not regard such affiliation as the be all and end all of our activities, national and local, but merely considered that it fitted in with the situation in which the Communist Party found itself at the present moment. He would prefer to discuss it from the

branch aspect rather than from the national one. It was easy to oppose affiliation from the historical point of view, and so discussed the subject lent itself to eloquence. As with previous resolutions, we had had talk about institutions decaying and dying, and that this and that would have to change. He would ask the Conference to bear in mind what used to be said in the Socialist movement, that you could not have a revolution until the material conditions were ripe for that revolution. The argument against affiliation to the Labour Party had been entirely upon that basis; in other words that the great material forces were outweighing the efforts of humanity generally, and that we had got to wait until the historic process showed itself before we made a move. It had been that kind of idea that had kept the bulk of revolutionary Socialists from expressing themselves in actual concrete data and in detail fight whether political or industrial. But he wanted to urge that a revolutionary situation, when it came, meant the handling of data to hand, that was to say, the material conditions we found. It did not mean standing aloof. It was all right looking upon history as a film coming from a cinematograph merely to provide text books for classes and so on; but we were beginning to understand that the human being could at any rate apply intelligence to that historical process, and by putting ourselves in the line of fight wherever it showed itself we could develop the social strain wherever we could. He claimed that we were putting that consciousness into the historical development, and in that respect affiliation to the Labour Party fitted in with other factors. He was a town councillor, he had not been run by the Labour Party but by a Socialist group as a Communist. He had entered the fight as a propaganda fight and had swept the deck. The point to be observed was that if our revolutionary philosophy was correct, it was capable of being applied to the things that we had at hand to-day. There had been criticism in his locality that Socialist town councillors were useless because they worked the current institutions, operated by taxing property and so on; and that consequently Communism could not operate. But he suggested, from inside knowledge of the work of the town council, that town councillors got facts and data to enable them to put the Communist point of view. We criticised collectivism, for instance, showing that it was used now to make profits and so relieve rates; but the Communist town councillor could use his position to demonstrate that it was possible, by shoving up rates, to get the tram and other public services free upon a communal basis. In other words, if our philosophy was any good it could be applied now to material conditions. In every locality, and however we expressed ourselves—whether as shop stewards, members of trade unions or however it might be—we had to develop social strains wherever they showed themselves. Revolutions did not come along preconceived lines; one never knew



where the revolution would break out. It was our duty, if a social strain showed itself, even if it was only a reform movement, to get inside and develop that strain. Ultimately through such strains we should bring about a breakdown of the capitalist system. Instead of talking of material conditions being ripe, we should be helping them to become ripe.

T. Bell said he wished to oppose an observation of those who were advancing the case for affiliation to the Labour Party, that they are realists. From his point of view it seemed they were the very opposite, having regard to the purpose for which this Convention was called. This Convention was called to establish a Communist Party, and, at this stage to start an argument about affiliation to the Labour Party, and other secondary and minor questions before we have gathered together the elements that were going to make the Communist Party, far from being realist was in essence utopian. It seemed to him that this was the point that all had missed up to this stage, that we want to get together a Communist Party, and we want to devise the best possible method of bringing all the elements that are agreed upon Communism into one camp. But instead of that we have been trying to discuss supposed differences between us before we have actually united. He submitted, as a case in favour of non-affiliation to the Labour Party, that at the present time there was in the country a volume of opinion that could be rallied to the banner of Communism if we make it clear and emphatic from the very beginning that we were not going merely to change the name of this Party, but that we have learned from the experience of the last four or five years to cut the painter so far as old policies were concerned. We wanted to convince people that it was not merely a case of changing the name of the B.S.P. To suggest that we were apart from the working class simply because we decided not to affiliate with the Labour Party was absurd. Who were we? Who was going to be the Communist Party? Were we not the proletariat? Did we not come from the workshops, factories, mines and industrial concerns? Did we not move in and through, and in the course of our social life come into contact with our fellow workers in all spheres of life? This was sufficient contact to go upon once we got the Communist Party set up. It seemed to him that we were afraid of our own strength. Two speakers, Mrs. Bamber and Fred Shaw, have shown that they could stand on their own legs without assistance from the Labour Party, and get into the council on a strict Bolshevik programme. He could substantiate that from his own experience and that of the Chairman at the last election. We stood on our own pins in defiance of the Labour Party, and not only carried on very valuable Bolshevik propaganda, but received a vote that put to shame many of the votes that were cast for other candidates who were using all the other methods of persuasion, as allies of the Labour Party and so forth, to effect their propaganda.

What we wanted to do at this stage was to take our courage in our hands and become an independent party. The first essential to rally together all the elements in the country in favour of Communism, was to make it clear that we have no associations with and did not stand for the same policy as the Labour Party, that we were a revolutionary party and meant revolution—and it was not a case of a revolution in the millennium but of a revolution in the immediate future. It was possible. And the Communist Party was the Party that had got to foment and handle any situation that might fairly operate. Let it not be suggested that we were only a handful. We were only a handful, only a few; but all revolutionary movements began with a few. What we have to keep in mind was this, that the industrial, social, financial and political situation and stability of capitalism was breaking down. We wanted a Communist Party clear and distinct from any association with reformism or the Labour Party, and in order to get a party that would be worthy of its name at this stage, we wanted to declare against affiliation with the Labour Party as the one method of rallying the people to our side.

Wm. Paul, summing up the case against Labour Party affiliation, said: Various arguments have been put forward this afternoon as to why we should be affiliated to the Labour Party. We have the argument that we have to remember that we are at a certain historic period, and are faced with certain institutions within which we are compelled to operate. Our friends in favour of Labour Party affiliation put forward the suggestion that we should operate within the trade union movement and Labour Party. They say: "If you leave the trade union movement and do not participate in these trade union struggles, you are betraying the working class, and in the measure that you participate in these trade union struggles logically you must participate in the struggle of the political expression of trade unionism; that is the Labour Party." There is no analogy. On the industrial field, and this is what they always forget, the working class, whether they like it or not, are compelled to face issues that present themselves in a particular, concrete character; which the working class understand inside out. It is always a question of a shorter working day, or an increase in wages. Nobody can camouflage that issue, and because of these issues which arise as a consequence of the economic position of the working class in society, we take our stand there and join issue in all the struggles of the masses, and in that demonstrate that the Communists are always on the side of the workers. What happens in the Labour Party? You come on to the political field. What happens then? You cease to deal with immediate, concrete issues? When the Labour Party comes upon the platform it is upon such questions as the futility of reciprocity. The worker says: "What is reciprocity?" The result is that, owing to the

very nature of this purely abstract position the working class can be diddled on the political field, whereas they cannot on the industrial field. We say then that we join issue with the working class in every one of these industrial activities, because it is there that the working class works out its fight in its own way. But on the political field, especially with the Parliamentary metaphysicians, whom we know in the Labour Party, to camouflage the issue on every occasion, the working class cannot face the issue because they are asked to vote on abstractions. Take the other point. It shows we take our part in the struggles of the working class. Shaw says that we Communists have to be wherever a strain manifests itself that may lead to a revolutionary issue. The danger is that when the revolutionary strain manifests itself you will find that it operates in the Labour Party in such a way that the people controlling that party will strangle the strain. We need not remember about Liebknecht working hand in hand with the Social-Democratic Party. The one mistake Liebknecht made was when he voted the war credits there, because he was swayed by the Social-Democratic Party against his own wishes. Only when he cut himself adrift and stood as a Communist, and went on with the policy that led to the Spartacist Communist movement and ultimately to his death, was that cancelled.

J. F. Hodgson, replying in favour of affiliation, said: Mr. Chairman and comrades, I have been expecting to hear from those who have been defending non-affiliation to the Labour Party an answer to my question: "Why will you work inside the industrial movement of the workers and refuse to work inside the political movement?" There is no answer to that. I have had it from Comrade Paul in this way, that on the industrial field you have to deal with questions of hours and wages and so forth, and that the workers cannot be diddled there. What? They are diddled all the time! They are diddled with a consistency and regularity that becomes absolutely depressing. "On the political field you deal with abstractions, and it is more easy to diddle the workers." All the more reason you should be on the political field to prevent them being diddled. Do we not deal with abstractions? Is it not our business to deal with abstractions? Absolutely! And we can deal with abstractions to far better effect than Henderson and Clynes. What are you afraid of in being inside the political movement of the workers? The strength of your own arguments? Or do you fear that the silvery eloquence of Henderson and Clynes will rob you of your revolutionary enthusiasm? You are thinking all the time of the Labour Party as consisting of its leaders. It is nothing of the sort. Go to a Labour Party meeting. You will find delegates of the local trade unions, the best men who could be selected in the locality to act as delegates. They are functioning as trade union delegates on the political field, and unless you are there with your armoury of facts and arguments, they will be left at the mercy of people more



unscrupulous. How is it in this great political movement of the workers they are victimised by people such as we know? Because the other people have beaten us. That is all. They have got hold of the political movement of the workers because we have been absent. You are asking us to continue that futility. Our Communist Party has got to be revolutionary. We have to work, struggle, organise, take every opportunity we have to stir up discontent and foment revolt. Wherever there is a strike we have to give it a revolutionary aim and purpose, and wherever the workers are there to be influenced it is our business to be there, too. Let us start right. Let us start as a party which is dealing with realities and not abstractions. Let us start as a party which is not merely dealing in theories—though it can do that—but is also ready, as I have said before, to march step by step with the working class leading them on to victory; not by reason of the fact that it sets itself up on a pedestal as having superior knowledge to the working class, but in all of the working class movement, directing it, inspiring it, carrying it ultimately to victory by this means.

The Chairman said he thought all would agree that the discussion had been the most organised and exhaustive one that had taken place in this country on the question of the merits of affiliation or otherwise to the Labour Party. He knew there would be some delegates who would feel a bit disappointed that they had not got their particular point of view put before the Conference; but he hoped they were bigger in soul than to allow that sort of thing to worry them.

The vote was then taken, and 100 votes were given in favour of proposition "A," as against 85 for proposition "B," so that affiliation with the Labour Party was carried.

W. Mellor said he had voted in favour of affiliation, but he thought the present situation a very serious one, and that it would test the loyalty of both sides. There was a close division of opinion inside the Conference, and there was going to be a close division of opinion inside the Communist Party. It was a matter which should not be taken light heartedly. The temporary Executive ought to consider the position seriously. It should consider thoroughly not only the decision come to, but the implications of that decision, and should report to the Conference which would be held when the Communist Party was constitutionally established and a new Executive took office. We did not want, during this period of incubation, that anybody should feel that the thing was being done in a hurry without our understanding what it meant, or that the minority was being bludgeoned. At the next Conference there should be a report as to exactly what affiliation meant, then we should be in a better position to decide once and for all whether we should go in or stay out. He suggested this course because he wanted to avoid the question coming up every year.

J. Hamilton (Liverpool Communist Unity Group) said he had not previously spoken, other people having expressed the feeling of the group he represented; but he would have to report to his group, and he wanted to know what the position would be if the Communist Party applied for affiliation to the Labour Party, and was not accepted on account of its Communist programme?

Another delegate said he knew the feeling of his own group and others he had been in contact with, and he thought the difficulty we were now faced with might be best met by leaving each local group to decide for itself; instead of binding the whole Communist Party. It should be a matter of local initiative.

The Chairman said that he had been chairman of the Joint Committee and also one of the delegates from the group that had been most vehement in its opposition to the Labour Party. He, and those who agreed with him, felt their defeat most keenly; but they accepted it in the spirit in which they had invited the question to be brought before the Convention. They would pursue their activities in the Communist Party now subservient to the will of that party. He appealed to any who were not inclined to adopt this policy to abide loyally by the Convention's decision on the matter. They should rest in hope that circumstances in future would convince the other delegates of the wisdom of the policy they had recommended. The Communist Party was greater than the shirt it would wear. He hoped the tolerance, the lack of personal passion that had been shown in the discussion, would be carried into the Communist Party. Its members would meet in districts where they had never met before, except in vigorous opposition, or even vindictive rivalry. They would meet on common ground, in one party, and he hoped they would try to eliminate any contact they might have had with the traditions and party organisation of the past, and would subordinate themselves to the position made for them in the Communist Party.

W. Mellor said he would like the Chairman to answer the question that had been put, as to what would be the attitude of the Communist Party if its application to join the Labour Party was refused.

The Chairman replied that if the Labour Party refused to let the Communist Party in, he did not see how the latter could get in. He knew certain individuals who would be received within the Labour Party with anything but a hearty welcome. He also knew that at the present moment the Labour Party was considering its attitude towards an application for admission from the Communist Party.

F. Willis said he felt a word should be said on the side of those who had been in favour of affiliation. Like Macmanus, representing the other point of view, they felt that the Communist Party was greater than any tactic they might decide on for the moment. It would be the duty and pleasure of those who favoured affiliation to the Labour Party to show that they were not less

revolutionary than those who were not in favour of such affiliation. All agreed in being in favour of revolution at the earliest possible moment and by the shortest way.

### TELEGRAM TO THIRD INTERNATIONAL.

The next business was that the Chairman asked the Conference (on the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee) to send the following telegram to the Third International :—

United Communist Party of Great Britain constituted to-day on the following bases :—

Adoption of Soviet system for achieving power by the workers.

Proletarian Dictatorship as means of combating counter-revolution.

Adherence to Third International.

Parliamentary action as means of revolutionary propaganda and agitation.

Affiliation to the Labour Party as a revolutionary tactic.

Party expresses joy at being able to march hand in hand with great Russian and other Communist Parties of the world.

Long live the Russian Soviet Republic!

Long live the Third International!

Long live Communism!

This was agreed to.

### TELEGRAM TO RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Chairman said he had another recommendation from the Standing Orders Committee, that the following telegram be sent to the Russian Communist Party :—

The Communist Party in Conference assembled sends its greetings to Russian Communist Party and to the victorious Russian proletariat; demands immediate recognition of the Soviet Government and peace with Russia to be concluded at a general peace conference held in full publicity; and calls upon the organised workers in their forthcoming ballot to show that they are prepared to compel the fulfilment of these demands by direct action.

He said this telegram had in view the possibility of a peace conference meeting some time next week in connection with not only the Russian but the world situation. If the peace conference was held it would be circumscribed to circumstance that would be anything but favourable to the working class movement, Russian and international. There was a suggestion that its deliberations should not be in open light and full publicity, but in the cloister, the public only getting what information those in authority chose to issue. This was our protest against any such action.

The resolution was agreed to.

### THE LABOUR PARTY AGAIN.

The Chairman (reverting to the resolution as to affiliation with the Labour Party) said that three amendments had been handed up which would only have applied if "B" had been carried, and as it had not been carried they fell to the ground. He had another that was handed up by the Cardiff group to be moved if "A" was carried. This group wanted a proviso that the Communist Party should be allowed to retain freedom of action in regard to agitational work. But he was not going to ask the Convention to



pass this, because he thought it was a matter for the Executive Committee. In his opinion, it would be a complete travesty of the spirit of the Convention if the Executive, or anyone in the party, allowed the Labour Party to circumscribe the independence of spirit within the Communist Party.

W. Saltmarsh, on behalf of the Cardiff group, said he agreed to this action.

### TENTATIVE PROPOSALS.

The Convention then returned to the "Tentative Proposals providing for Transformation into the Communist Party," which had been partly discussed on the Saturday evening.

These proposals were very fully explained—a great deal of detail being added—and were discussed at length. An amendment on No. 14 altering the headquarters' levy from 1s. a month to 6d. a month was moved and seconded, but was lost. On No. 5 it was explained that the Provisional Committee were arranging for a special Literature Department, under the name of the Universal Publishing Co., with comrade S. H. Raines as manager, and this brought forth certain statements concerning Raines and his association with the Manchester Labour College and the Manchester Reformers' Bookshop, which were stated by delegates to be in circulation, and called for an investigation. Eventually it was agreed—the Provisional Committee concurring—that this item be deferred pending a thorough investigation by the Provisional Executive. The Tentative Proposals were then submitted to the Convention en bloc and carried unanimously.

### NAME OF PARTY.

In answer to Mrs. Walker (B.S.P., East Liverpool), the Chairman stated that the name of the party was the "Communist Party of Great Britain."

### MISCELLANEOUS RESOLUTIONS.

The Chairman said there was a resolution from the Socialist Prohibition Fellowship as follows:—

That the Communist Party will throw the weight of its influence in favour of the complete suppression of the manufacture of alcoholic liquors for beverage purposes, or alternatively appoints a committee to consider the matter in the light of Russian experience and revolutionary necessity.

R. Stewart (Socialist Prohibition Fellowship) said that, irrespective of whether the Convention passed the motion or not, it was a question that we should have to consider. There was little sense in passing resolutions and not expecting anything to happen, and we had become famous for that kind of thing in Britain. Those who suggested we should pass to next business whenever Prohibition was mentioned had not apparently had the experience that he and others had had of the working class movement as it was at present—particularly in Scotland. The necessity for prohibition was certainly as great here as in Russia. He wanted Prohibition considered as a revolutionary tactic; it was certainly as revolutionary as affiliation to the Labour Party.

He did not want to go into the pros and cons at the moment—he knew he could lick the opposition when he did—all he asked was that the matter should be referred to the Executive for their consideration.

The resolution was seconded and referred to the Provisional Executive.

The Chairman said he had a resolution from the Abertillery Communist Unity Group, that the question of individuals being members of the Communist Party, whilst holding membership of any other political party, be remitted to the Executive for their consideration.

This was agreed to.

W. Hill (Oldham Unity Committee) moved that the Conference instruct the E.C. to appoint food, fuel and house controllers in view of the imminence of the revolution.

This and another resolution, that the badge of the Communist Party should be the Red Flag, were also remitted to the Executive Committee.

### YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

Jas. Stewart, who had been the delegate from the Nottingham Communist Unity Group, but who now appeared on behalf of the Young Socialist League, addressed the Convention. He said he took the full credit for the organisation of the Young Socialist League. He had landed himself in gaol for it before it was born, but it was practically born before he came out. Those who applauded the names of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg should read Liebknecht's book on militarism and anti-militarism, and urge others to read it. For the very young of the working class there was the Socialist Sunday School movement, but when the boys and girls left the Sunday School—when they reached the age of starting to work—what literature was there to give them? What literature had the working class movement to give these boys and girls, that would explain their function inside the factory, mine or workshop? The Young Socialist League had been established, and would play a prominent part in the growth and development of the Communist Party. Boys not yet developed into men were investing all their pocket-money in supplying the literature we should have supplied years ago. Had we done this, the Communist Party would have come into being long since. Delegates should lay hold of the young and bring them into the movement. When they went back to their branches they should get into touch with the organisers of the Young Socialist League and the Editor of its official organ, "The Red Flag." Bring the boys and girls into the movement, and there would be more Communists when they grew up. All power to the young movement!

On this note the Convention practically closed; for the Chairman having very briefly addressed the delegates, asking them to see to it that the Communist Party was alive not merely

at its centre but right to the end of its tentacles, and hoping they would put into operation the spirit and enthusiasm manifested at the Convention, the proceedings terminated.

## APPENDIX A

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

The following is submitted on behalf of the Joint Provisional Committee as a record of the steps that have led up to the summoning of this Convention to establish the United Communist Party on a definite and permanent basis.

The present negotiations for Communist Unity have been proceeding for some fourteen months. After several attempts to discover a common platform between the various national Socialist organisations, the movement to unity took a new direction—in an endeavour to unite in one body all the revolutionary left wing groups and organisations that had Communism for their objective and adhered to the Third International.

It was conveyed to these various groups and organisations by the Central Executive Committee of the Third International at Moscow that it was the duty of all sincere Communists to work for unity, and that whilst differences and difficulties undoubtedly existed, the differences and difficulties must be overcome and not permitted to constitute an obstacle to unity in view of the need for consolidating the revolutionary Communist forces all over the world. A meeting was accordingly arranged in London in June, 1919, at which members of the B.S.P., S.L.P., W.S.F., and S. Wales S.S. attended with the hope of ascertaining what the possibilities for unity actually were.

The discussion showed that there was little, if any, disagreement so far as concerned fundamental principles and the general bases upon which the four organisations could unite. The main difficulty arose on the question of tactics, particularly in regard to the relations of the proposed new Party to the Labour Party and the existing industrial and political organisations of the working class. The B.S.P. representatives referred to the referendum of that organisation taken the previous year, and to the vote of its last Annual Conference, when the policy of working through the political Labour movement was reaffirmed by overwhelming majorities. And they stated that they felt that the bulk of the B.S.P. membership would make it conditional upon any steps in the direction of unity that the bases of amalgamation should include the affiliation of the new organisation to the Labour Party.

Against that the members of the S.L.P. and, to a less extent, the representatives of the W.S.F. and the S. Wales S.S., urged that, however much they, as individuals, might be prepared to make that concession in order to achieve unity, it would be quite useless for them to approach their members with any proposal for unity that made affiliation to the Labour Party one of the bases of amalgamation.

Subsequently, a further proposal was made as suggesting a middle course to which all might agree. That proposal was that the membership of the various bodies should be consulted as to their willingness to merge their respective organisations in one Communist Party, and that the question of the relations of the new Party with the Labour Party should be settled by the membership of the new Party when it was formed. Eventually this proposal was accepted by all present, and the conference adjourned on the understanding that it should be submitted to the various Executives in the following form:—

“That the membership of the various organisations be consulted as to their willingness to merge the existing organisations in a united Party, having for its object the establishment of Communism by means of the dictatorship of the working class working through Soviets; and that the question of the affiliation of the new Party to the Labour Party be settled by a referendum of the members three months after the Party is formed.”



This proposal was in due course submitted to and adopted by the Executives of the B.S.P., the W.S.F., and the S. Wales S.S. After some delay, it appeared that the Executive of the S.L.P. had not accepted the report of their members at the Unity Conference, and whilst they could hardly refuse to consult their membership on a proposal for unity that had assumed such concrete shape, nevertheless their referendum was to be taken in such fashion as was calculated to render its decision null and void so far as any definite step towards unity was concerned. The result of the S.L.P. referendum was, therefore, a foregone conclusion, and consisted of a pious declaration in favour of unity, the practical value of which was negated by a rigid refusal to allow the new party an opportunity whatever of departing, if it so wished, from the traditional policy of the S.L.P. on the tactical issues involved.

Thenceforward, right up to Easter of this year, efforts were made, both inside and outside of the S.L.P. to induce its Executive to reconsider their intransigent attitude that was tending to wreck the whole movement for Communist Unity. It was pointed out to them that the unity of the left wing organisations was only possible if all were prepared to make concessions; that other organisations concerned in the negotiations that attached equal importance as themselves, though from a different angle, to the tactical questions in dispute, were prepared to refer them for decision of the rank and file of the new Party; and they were repeatedly urged to send representatives to the Unity Conference where the points at issue could be discussed. But all to no avail.

Meanwhile, a struggle was proceeding inside the S.L.P. itself between its conservative doctrinaire executive and the elements that were genuinely desirous of a united Communist Party. These elements summoned a special conference of their sympathisers within the S.L.P., which was held at Nottingham at Easter, and from that conference issued a manifesto in favour of unity, and explaining and defending the attitude of the S.L.P. members at the original Unity Conference. This served to rally those in the S.L.P. who were in favour of a Communist Party, and to save themselves the Executive of the S.L.P. expelled the signatories from the Party's ranks. Those expelled from the S.L.P. thereupon constituted themselves a Communist Unity Group and applied for and were admitted to separate representation at the Unity negotiations. From that moment the S.L.P. ceased officially to figure in the negotiations, and its place was taken by the Communist Unity Group. Incidentally, this Group attached to itself every single member of the S.L.P. of standing and repute, and all the known active speakers and workers joined with them, so that they now stand as a group much stronger than the S.L.P. ever stood both in morale and numbers.

This change allowed the deliberations to proceed a step further, but shortly a fresh obstacle had to be encountered. Although the discussion on the Unity Conference showed that the tactical difficulties in the way of unity were still not altogether surmounted, they also demonstrated that while each side was not prepared to accept fully the position of the other, nevertheless each—that is so far as the B.S.P. and the Communist Unity Group were concerned—was determined to hold fast to the negotiations in the hope of some way out presenting itself. The attitude assumed by the W.S.F., however, became more and more lukewarm and, later, distinctly hostile, and their contributions to the discussions revealed them as being more desirous of creating additional obstacles and propounding fresh problems than of devising ways and means of overcoming difficulties. With them anti-parliamentarism—which, in the initial stages of the discussion, they stated they considered to be of altogether secondary importance to the need for unity—suddenly became a fetish, and was used continually to hamper the making of any real progress towards establishing the Communist Party.

Nevertheless, the discussions were continued, in spite of the W.S.F. rather than by their aid, and eventually, a stage was reached when the long-awaited solution appeared to present itself. It was decided that, in view of the failure of the delegates to agree upon the question of Labour Party affiliation, the whole matter of tactics should be submitted to a special Convention of the rank and file to be arranged by the Unity Conference. This proposal was

unanimously agreed to by all the sections, and the Conference resolved itself into a Joint Provisional Committee for carrying the agreement into effect.

It was felt, however, that for the rank and file Conventions to be of any value at all, some understanding should be arrived at as to its relation to the projected Communist Party. Obviously, if such a Convention were held, and no stipulation made in connection with the Communist Party, there was a great danger that the various sides to the negotiations might simply use the Convention to find the volume and extent of their own support and influence, that those whose views on the various questions of tactics were not endorsed by the Convention might break away, and that the outcome would mean several Communist Parties instead of one.

Such an outcome, as will be readily appreciated, would have been anything but unity, and would certainly not have justified the twelve months' deliberation on the matter. It was, therefore, resolved that the National Convention should proclaim by resolution the formation of the Communist Party, which resolution, if accepted, would transform the remainder of the Convention into a Conference of the Communist Party, deciding its tactical policy and instructing its officials accordingly, the minority in each case being expected to abide by that decision. The bodies participating in summoning the National Convention were to be regarded as pledged to merge themselves in the new Communist Party, and representation to the Convention was to be held to imply that those branches, groups, and societies sending delegates would be bound by the decisions of the Convention and become branches of the Communist Party. To prevent any ambiguity on this point the invitation circular was to make it clear that this course was to be followed, and only those bodies prepared to agree to it were to be urged to send delegates.\*

To this the W.S.F. delegation took exception; they presently broke away entirely from the Provisional Committee, and at a tiny and uninfluential gathering of their supporters, held on June 19th, ostensibly summoned to discuss their views on the Convention proposals, decided to change their name from the "Workers' Socialist Federation" to the "Communist Party." This may have been considered good tactics from their point of view, in that it may serve to give them temporarily a new lease of life. But that such disruptive action deserves the severest condemnation of all genuine Communists is seen from the message received from Comrade Lenin by the Joint Provisional Committee and from the declarations presented by the Central Executive Committee to the Congress of the Third International just assembled at Moscow.

The Joint Provisional Committee has, therefore, proceeded with its work on the lines agreed upon, and it is to give effect to that agreement that this Convention has been called. It is the conviction of the Joint Provisional Committee that a great deal of the difficulty that has had to be met and contended against will disappear of itself once the real Communist Party stands as an established fact. The pursuit of its policy and the defence of its programme will create such an atmosphere as is calculated to develop the revolutionary fervour that is latent within our movement, and sweep aside the distrust, suspicion, and tardy indecision that has marked it hitherto.

On behalf of the Provisional Committee for the Communist Party,

ALBERT INKPIN,

SECRETARY.

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## APPENDIX B

Fraternal messages received at the Convention and reported to the delegates :—

N. LENIN.

Having received the letter of the Joint Provisional Committee of the Communist Party of Britain, dated June 20th, I hasten to reply in

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\* The S. Wales S.S. at this stage had become defunct. Their place on the Joint Provisional Committee was subsequently taken by the S. Wales Communist Council, a much stronger and more influential body.

accordance with their request that I am in complete sympathy with their plans for the immediate organisation of a Communist Party in England. I consider the policy of comrade Sylvia Fankhurst and of the Workers' Socialist Federation in refusing to collaborate in the amalgamation of the British Socialist Party, Socialist Labour Party and others into one Communist Party to be wrong. I personally am in favour of participation in Parliament and of adhesion to the Labour Party on condition of free and independent Communist activity. This policy I am going to defend at the Second Congress of the Third International on July 15th, at Moscow. I consider it most desirable that a Communist Party be speedily organised on the basis of the decisions and principles of the Third International, and that that party be brought into close touch with the Industrial Workers of the World and the Shop Steward Committees in order to bring about their complete union.

LENIN,

*Moscow, July 8th.*

### GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

German Communist Party regretting sincerely the impossibility of sending a delegate conveys heartiest wishes for the complete success of your Congress. Unity of principles, tactics, party organisation and action will make the British Communist Party a powerful and glorious army of the Third International. We hail in the delegates of the present Congress the leading party in the future revolutionary struggles of the proletarian masses. Fraternal greetings. Three cheers for the British Communist Party and the British working class. Three cheers for the Communist Parties in all countries, for the Third International and for the world revolution.

CLARA ZETKIN.

Dear Comrades,—To our thanks for your kind invitation we join our congratulations on the progress achieved in bringing about this very important Congress. We are sorry not to be able to send a fraternal delegate, but the political situation is so loaded up with the elements of conflicts, above all is so rich in tasks and duties which are imposed on us by the struggle in which we are engaged, that the Party cannot spare anyone for any length of time, at least, for the present.

Yet, dear comrades, we are aware of the very great importance of your Congress, which is to give to the growing revolutionary movement of the British working class a leading Communist Party, whose force will be unity of action, based on and guaranteed by a unity of principle, tactics and organisation. Such a Party will have the consciousness and the power to use all weapons in the hands of the proletariat—parliamentarism included—as revolutionary means for the revolutionary aim, overthrowing capitalist order and building up Communism by Soviet order. And it will largely contribute to bring the Communists into the closest touch and connection with the labouring masses themselves. This Party will realise the revolutionary actions of the labouring masses and can never share the childish ambition to replace such actions by revolutionary trifling. The international political situation makes most urgent the international revolutionary collaboration of Communists in all countries. The Entente Imperialists continue their criminal efforts to crush Communist Soviet Russia by all means. For this purpose they now sustain and arm the rapacious Polish Imperialism. At Spa the counter-revolutionaries of the victorious Entente and of vanquished Germany have come to a fraternal understanding in order to disarm and kill the proletarian revolution in Germany and to re-establish the weakened and crumbling capitalist system by aggravating the exploitation and servitude of the working class people. Against international capitalism and international counter-revolution—international Communism, the Third International, the world revolution. We are quite sure the British Communist Party will be a very strong force in the struggle, while the Third International will have



to fight against the counter-revolution all over the world and not least against the Capitalists and Imperialists of Great Britain.

Dear comrades, we trust in the good solid work which the Congress will achieve in this respect. We know by hard experience how great the difficulties are which confront those who wish to constitute a Communist Party, united in principles and tactics. But we have learned to deal with those difficulties and to overcome them. All our Party's discussions and splits have served to increase the consciousness and power of the Party. We are convinced you will have the same experience. By fighting confusions and illusions we arrived at clearness and strength and succeeded in becoming all the more powerful against our national and international foes.

Our most hearty wishes for the work of the Congress, for the development of the young British Communist Party.

We are, dear friends and comrades, with you in your efforts, with the fighting proletarian class of Great Britain, with the exploited and struggling wage-slaves in all countries. For the world revolution!

Sincerely yours, For the Communist Party of Germany,  
(by order) CLARA ZETKIN.

#### DUTCH COMMUNIST PARTY.

Dear Comrades,—We received your invitation and regret we cannot send a delegate to your Congress. Nevertheless we send our best wishes and hope that your Congress will establish a great united Communist Party in Great Britain, capable of leading the British working masses to Communism.

Long live the unity of all Communists in Great Britain!

Long live the Third International!

The Executive of the Dutch Communist Party.

J. C. CETON, Secretary.

#### AUSTRIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

Dear Comrade,—The German-Austrian Communist Party greets and congratulates the foundation of a Communist Party in Great Britain.

We hope that you will develop successfully in your country and form a strong party, containing all Communist groups of Great Britain, and all workers who acknowledge the Third International to be their true fatherland.

The advance of our glorious brethren, the Russian Communists, and the victories of the heroic Red Army gather the capitalists of the whole world in the fight against the red Republic of the Russian workers and peasants. At this time more than ever the workers are bound to form a single front against the dark powers of the enemy.

Our Communist Party in Austria was founded nearly two years ago, at the time when Austrian militarism was smashed on the front of the Imperialist world war. You, in a country of victorious capitalism, are meeting with a much harder struggle to win the brains and the hearts of the workers, who still believe in a peaceful development of the international class struggle. Yours also is the task of fighting the oldest and at the same time the strongest capitalism and imperialism of the whole world.

For the successful progress of the Party we venture to express the opinion that it is necessary that differences on questions of minor importance such as participation in parliamentary action, should not be allowed to hamper the firm fight or prevent the unification of all revolutionary Communists.

Long live the Third International!

Long live the Workers' and Peasants' Republic of Russia!

Long live the Workers' and Peasants' League of the Whole World!

Long live the Communist Party of Great Britain!

For the Austrian Communist Party,  
JOHN WERTHEIM.

#### ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY.

Dear Comrades,—We are unable to send a representative to take part in your Conference of the 31st of July owing to the absence of several

of our members in Russia attending the Second Congress of the Third International, and also on account of the numerous economic agitations which are now being waged in Italy. We are very pleased with the agreement arrived at between the best British elements to accomplish a common task according to the policy of the Third International. The importance of such an event must not be overlooked at this moment when the representatives of the Communist Parties the world over are meeting at Moscow to consider the best means of bringing about the World Revolution.

Our proletariat is watching with sympathy the progress of the British proletariat which is liberating itself from Social Democratic error and marching decisively towards Communism.

The Eastern bourgeoisie are looking hopefully to the English bourgeoisie to defend them against the ever-growing menace of the Revolution. We are confident that the English proletariat will be able to secure the triumph and the consolidation of the Russian Revolution which is the matrix of the World Revolution.

The working classes of Italy have done and will do everything in their power to accomplish this supremely important task and stretch out their hands to English comrades who are uniting with them against the common foe. It is not now the hour for hesitation or vain promises. What the Communists do to-day will assure them the triumph of the future. It is the hour for definite decisions of historic responsibility which must be faced without hesitation. To the comrades assembled at London we send these earnest words, which are the expression of the determination of the Italian Socialists.

In the name of the Italian Socialists we greet you, looking with you towards the Universal Republic of the Councils. Long live Communist England!

(Signed) EGIDIO GENNARI, Political Secretary.

#### SWISS COMMUNIST PARTY.

Dear Comrades,—We are in receipt of your invitation to attend your Convention. As it is impossible for us to send a delegation we think it is our duty to send a short report of the attitude of our Party.

The Swiss Communist Party during the last few years has developed with rapid strides all the revolutionary forces among the workers, and is the only revolutionary organisation in Switzerland that clearly and firmly represents the Third International. The official organ of the Swiss Communists appears twice weekly, and numberless propaganda leaflets and publications are distributed.

In regard to the question of Parliamentary action, we do not dogmatise, nor do we completely dispense with same. At our last Conference the Party laid down the following policy:—

In all trade unions, Communist groups are to be formed whose duty it is to influence the Workers' Committees and to organise same when not already in existence, also to organise the workers in a systematic way preparatory to taking over production and dealing with all social questions affecting the whole country.

The Party consider it absolutely necessary that the proletariat should be especially enlightened upon the great power of united mass action. The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland, which is in the sharpest opposition to our party, is small in numbers. The left wing of this party, however, favours affiliation to the Third International. During recent months attempts have been made by this section to bring about unity with the Swiss Communist Party. For this purpose it is absolutely necessary that they should break completely with the counter-revolutionary elements in the Social-Democratic Party.

What the result will be it is still too early to say. The Moscow Congress will decide many problems that affect our country.

In the meantime the Swiss Communist Party will continue its fight under the Red revolutionary flag.

The Revolutionary Proletariat of Switzerland send their British comrades the best international greetings.

Long live the British Communist Party!

All hail to the World's Communist Revolution!

For the Executive of the Swiss Communist Party,  
ROBERT MULLER.

#### LEFT WING I.L.P. GROUP.

Dear Comrade,—On behalf of the Third Internationalist Comrades of the I.L.P., now known as the Left Wing of the I.L.P., we send you fraternal greetings.

Our group is at present knitted together in spirit and is not cemented into an organisation of a physical character. Our main object is to adhere to our organisation, which logically in our opinion can have no other course open to it but to act with other International comrades along the lines of the Third International, and to which end we are now unceasingly devoted.

You will readily understand, therefore, the necessity of our absence from your Convention, though the rapid establishment of a strong Communist Party in Great Britain is as dear to us as to you. We would at the same time submit for your consideration one or two features from our point of view, so that nothing in your deliberations, expressions, or decisions may unwittingly go against the interest of Socialism or Communism in this country where we are already far below the mark as compared to our neighbouring comrades.

We are holding a position of great strategic advantage, at the present moment, against odds. If we give way or we are scattered, the loss will not be ours individually, but of the movement generally, just as much as the gain would be by a successful issue of our perseverance. We want our ranks to stand firm as well as solid, we can ill afford to give away our fighters. We even need reinforcements. We therefore trust you will take no action which might scatter or thin our ranks, and we even hope that you will do everything in your power to reinforce us with every fraternal assistance, so that we may ultimately hold the I.L.P. citadel in the cause and service of Communism here and on the Continent.

When we reflect for a moment upon the action of our impatient comrades who now number several thousand, who with a clearer view of Socialism either left us or would not join our ranks, we deeply deplore the result. During the last three years of momentous events British Socialism has deserted Europe for all practical purposes. Our separated advanced comrades have not been able to achieve anything in effect, and have also disabled the I.L.P. from taking its place where it ought to have taken it after the Russian Revolution. Had we been all together the I.L.P. would have careered better in practical politics, and with its general touch with the Labour movement here, it would have affected the entire trend of course in this country.

Time has now come to undo this error and not to repeat it, so while we wish you success in your great effort, we invite you to give us every fraternal and communal assistance that you can give us in all our branches in the country.

Yours fraternally,  
HELEN CRAWFURD (Glasgow),  
SHAPURJI SAKALATVALA (City London),  
PETER KEATING (Clapham),  
E. H. BROWN (Shipley),

For all other comrades.

#### LITHUANIAN COMMUNIST FEDERATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Greetings, Comrades. Do not fail to carry through the great work to establish a stable Communist Party. We are with you.

TOM MANN.

Comrades,—I much regret my inability to be present at the Communist Unity Convention on the 31st inst., owing to having to be at Consett, Co. Durham, on that date.



I desire therefore to express my sincere hope that real success will attend the efforts of those who assemble, and that we may as a result have a thorough-going Communist Party, equal to carrying on the educational and propagandist work needed to develop and focus opinion, and ere long enable us to reach the Communist Ideal.

With fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,

TOM MANN.

#### NORWEGIAN LABOUR PARTY.

Comrades,—Your communication about the Communist Convention has been received. We thank you for your invitation to send fraternal delegates, but we have at present 10 delegates attending the Congress of the Third International. Besides this we are carrying on a good deal of work in the different organisations. It is therefore impossible to send fraternal delegates to your Convention.

We express the best wishes for the unification of the Communist groups in England. The organised workers here are specially interested in the development of Communist organisation in your country. We shall follow your deliberations with the keenest interest, and are expecting good results.

The Labour Party in Norway has decided for the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat. We take part in elections, but see in mass action the real means for attaining Socialism.

The Norwegian Labour Party has now a membership of 120,000. The Trade Union Congress, held last week, decided also in favour of the same principles, and sent a delegate to the International Communist Congress in Russia. The Central Trade Union organisations have a membership of 150,000. The party and trade unions consist essentially of the same members.

With fraternal greetings,

MARTIN TRANMAEL, Secretary.

KYRRE GREPP, Chairman.

#### HUNGARIAN COMMUNISTS.

Dear Comrades,—Your Congress takes place on the anniversary of the horrible and memorable downfall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Exactly a year to-day Entente capitalism, under the direction of the English bourgeoisie and the Rumanian hordes, destroyed the Soviet régime. How could this happen? Only because the British proletariat had not rallied to the banner of the Third International; neither were the British masses sufficiently alive and interested in the revolutionary movement that is taking place. Had the Soviets survived in Hungary your Congress to-day would be a guarantee that we had in Great Britain an active and virile fighting organisation.

Hungary was given over to the rapacity of the White hordes, and with the help of the Entente, they organised their blood-lust officer troops; and amidst the diabolical laughter of the Entente officers our brave comrades were ruthlessly hung.

Comrades, we cannot expect anything more from you than an aggressive battle against your own bourgeoisie and suppressors.

Your freedom from the domination of capitalism is at the same time our freedom. The horrible atrocities committed by the White Guards are known to everyone, and can be proved by documentary and sworn evidence. Everyone knows it—only the British Government will not acknowledge it—even to-day, after irreproachable evidence, they trot out their “humane” phrase mongering. What cant! On the other hand the solidarity of the bourgeoisie is actively supporting the robber bands of that gentleman Horthy. We beg of you aggressively to pursue the promoters of this horrible White terror. Your battle will be watched with keen interest by millions of Hungarian workers. Your success and triumph will be acclaimed by hundreds of millions the world over.

For laying the foundation-stone of the British Soviet Councils your work will not be better appreciated than by the Hungarian Socialist Information Bureau, Stockholm.

(Signed) PAUL THOMPSON.

## APPENDIX C

### TENTATIVE PROPOSALS PROVIDING FOR TRANSFORMATION INTO THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

1. That the present acting Joint Provisional Committee with an additional Six Members appointed from the Convention be elected as the Provisional Executive Committee for the Communist Party.

2. The Provisional Executive to draft a basis for Constitution and Rules, and submit same to Membership for Amendment and final approval by Referendum Vote.

3. The Provisional Executive to make temporary provision for carrying over the business of the Party until the end of December, 1920, as the financial year.

4. They accept the offer of the B.S.P. Executive of the use of the hall and offices at 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C.2, until the expiration of the tenancy at Christmas, 1920, or pending the obtaining of other suitable office accommodation.

5. They arrange for a complete examination of all literature in circulation with a view to the re-issue of publications going out of print, and also other manuscripts available dealing with the general revolutionary situation.\*

6. They consider a Uniform System of book-keeping for general use throughout the Party, and if possible have same ready for adoption at the beginning of the New Financial Year.

7. They arrange for election to office of a new E.C. by calling for Nominations and arranging a Ballot should such be necessary.

8. The Provisional Executive to expedite the transformation of all groups and branches into Units of the Communist Party.

9. They close up entirely all business transactions of branches and groups now merged in the Communist Party, as rapidly as possible, thus transforming all assets and liabilities into the common property of the Communist Party.

10. That all present party employees be taken over and requested to carry on pending any re-arrangements necessitated by the adoption of the Party rules.

11. That a central organ be issued on behalf of the Communist Party and that its name be The "COMMUNIST."

12. The Provisional Executive to make immediate application for affiliation to the Third International as the Communist Party of Great Britain.

13. The Provisional Executive pledges itself to facilitate in every possible way the transition into the Communist Party, and to do all it can to ensure that the new E.C. will be placed in possession of the full machinery of the Party.

14. FINANCE. That all members be levied 1s. per month for the five months August—December for headquarters purposes; the levies to be collected by the branches and remitted to the Central Office.

15. That pending the drafting of the Rules, the branches shall have liberty to fix the subscription of their members for the remainder of 1920, the Provisional Executive to issue temporary membership cards to the branches to cover this period.

#### GENERAL.

1. That all members and Branch officials assist in every way the efforts of the Provisional E.C. to set the Party on a sound and secure footing.

2. Branch Secretaries and other officials be urged to co-operate in every way with the adoption and operation of any temporary system of working which may be deemed necessary to carry over the period of transformation.

3. That all members extend loyalty and fidelity to the Communist Party as being greater and of more consequence than the personal and individual quality of any member thereof, and urge that all Members subordinate themselves to the general will of the Party.

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\* This was deferred pending an investigation by the Provisional Executive out of the discussion at the Convention.

# LIST OF DELEGATES, WITH BRANCHES AND GROUPS REPRESENTED.

## BRITISH SOCIALIST PARTY.

Ashton-under-Lyne	...	...	...	H. W. Inkpin.
Barking	...	...	...	H. L. Bryceson and H. Smith.
Bethnal Green	...	...	...	A. H. Gillison and J. Valentine.
Birkenshaw	...	...	...	Miss Balfour.
Bradford	...	...	...	Fred Shaw.
Central London	...	...	...	A. Angel, T. A. Avis, F. L. Kerran, C. L. Malone, M.P., and E. H. Whatton.
Clapham	...	...	...	A. M. Wall.
Desborough	...	...	...	— Griffiths.
Dumfries	...	...	...	Mrs. H. Inkpin.
Earlestown	...	...	...	Mrs. Nixon.
East Ham	...	...	...	J. Grainger.
Edinburgh	...	...	...	H. Hease.
Edmonton	...	...	...	A. Carter and G. Crouch.
Erith	...	...	...	Mrs. Kennedy.
Glasgow (Central)	...	...	...	W. A. Hill.
Glasgow (College)	...	...	...	Mrs. D. B. Montefiore.
Glasgow (Gorbals)	...	...	...	A. White.
Grays	...	...	...	F. Freestone.
Greenock	...	...	...	H. Hinshelwood.
Grimsby	...	...	...	J. F. Hodgson.
Hackney (Central)	...	...	...	E. Marsh and A. Nixon.
Hackney (South)	...	...	...	A. Vandome.
Hampstead	...	...	...	A. Edwards and H. Milsom.
Harlesden	...	...	...	F. D. Fitzgerald.
Hastings	...	...	...	W. Moffatt.
Hornsey	...	...	...	Mrs. A. Inkpin.
Huddersfield	...	...	...	Arthur Gardiner.
Islington (South)	...	...	...	J. T. Ives and A. Raxworthy.
Islington (West)	...	...	...	W. H. Brown and F. Tanner.
Kentish Town	...	...	...	O. Bangert, C. Batchelor, W. H. Ryde, A. G. Tomkins, and Miss I. Wilkinson.
Kettering	...	...	...	F. Day.
Leeds	...	...	...	W. P. Coates and H. H. Godley.
Liverpool (East)	...	...	...	Mrs. Bamber, J. Goldstein, and Mrs. Walker.
Manchester (Openshaw)	...	...	...	A. E. Adshead, J. Crossley, and J. Grierson.
Merthyr Vale	...	...	...	O. Williams.
National	...	...	...	Robert Williams.
Paddington	...	...	...	C. T. Hendin.
Paisley	...	...	...	E. W. Cant.
Plymouth	...	...	...	F. W. Llewellyn, A. Vickery, and Mrs. G. Vickery.
Rawtenstall	...	...	...	Geo. Deer.
Reading	...	...	...	G. Hicks, J. Luck, and E. Martin.
Rochdale	...	...	...	A. A. Watts.
Sheffield	...	...	...	D. Manoin, L. Royle, and G. Newton.
Southend	...	...	...	W. G. Anderson and S. G. Warr, Jnr.
South Salford	...	...	...	H. Addy, J. Forshaw, and A. A. Purcell.
Southwark	...	...	...	T. Barber, A. de Bois, and H. J. Morley.
Stalybridge	...	...	...	G. Roberts.
Stepney	...	...	...	B. Tobin.
Todmorden	...	...	...	A. T. Leat.
Tooting	...	...	...	A. R. Siffleet and P. Whitaker.
Walsall	...	...	...	H. W. Ward.



Walthamstow	...	...	...	G. S. Hinds.
Warrington	...	...	...	J. Dunbar and J. Houghton.
West Ham (South)	...	...	...	G. Elliston.
Wigan	...	...	...	Miss F. Baldwin.
Willesden	...	...	...	J. Ansell, —, Cochrane, W. Glendinning, C. A. Littlefield, G. Sinnico, Mrs. Sinnico, A. H. Vickers, and F. Willis.

#### COMMUNIST UNITY GROUP.

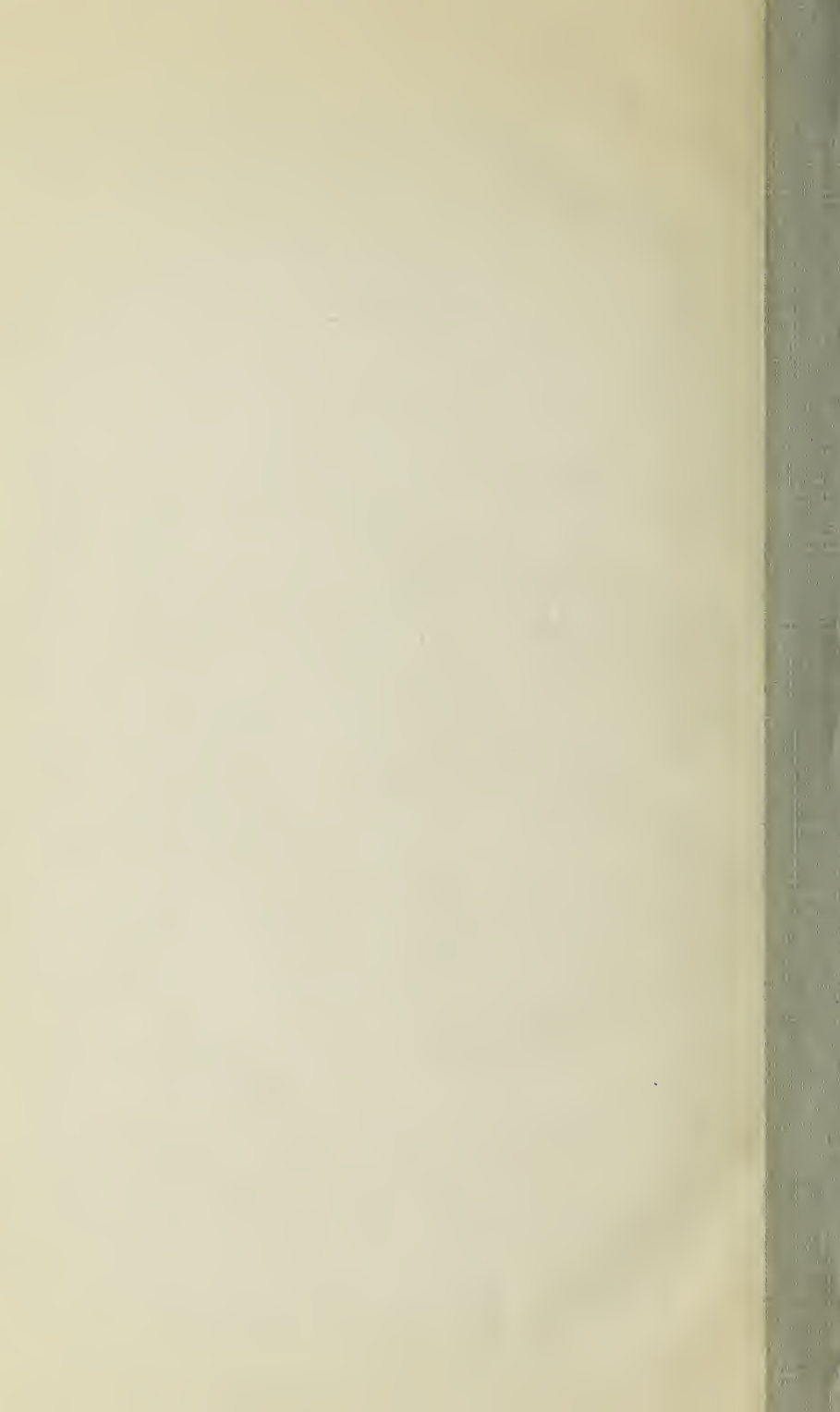
Aberdare	...	...	...	J. E. Thomas.
Abertillery	...	...	...	W. J. Hewlett.
Ashton-under-Lyne	...	...	...	H. Webb.
Birkenhead	...	...	...	J. Fitton.
Birmingham	...	...	...	F. B. Silvester and G. Smith.
Cardiff	...	...	...	W. Saltmarsh.
Coventry	...	...	...	R. Nicolai.
Derby	...	...	...	S. J. Alton.
Glasgow	...	...	...	Thos. Bell.
Littleboro	...	...	...	H. Webb.
Liverpool	...	...	...	J. Hamilton and J. Morton.
Netherfield	...	...	...	J. Nally.
Nottingham (Central)	...	...	...	Mrs. Stewart.
Nottingham (East)	...	...	...	Ben Levy.
Nottingham (South)	...	...	...	W. Lees.
Nottingham (West)	...	...	...	J. Stewart.
Oldham	...	...	...	W. Hill.
Rochdale	...	...	...	H. Webb.
Rotherham	...	...	...	J. W. Ibbotson and Mrs. Turner.
Sheffield	...	...	...	John Lawrie.
South Staffs.	...	...	...	R. Cobham.
Trethomas	...	...	...	T. J. Watkins.

#### MISCELLANEOUS GROUPS.

Acton Communist Group	...	...	E. A. Hooper.
Barking I.L.P.	...	...	A. W. Cox and R. F. Martin.
Battersea Herald League	...	...	Mrs. Durston, H. Waterman, and G. Wheeler.
Battersea Socialist Society	...	...	J. Clancy and W. Okines
Birmingham Shop Stewards	...	...	H. Stubbs.
Birmingham S.L.P.	...	...	W. Brain.
Bolton Communist Group	...	...	J. Leach.
Caerphilly C.L.C. Class	...	...	F. Evans.
City of London Labour Party	...	...	S. Hadwyn.
Doncaster Workers' Committee	...	...	N. Watkins.
Ferndale Socialist Society	...	...	C. L. Gibbons.
Glasgow (Garngad) I.L.P.	...	...	H. McMillan.
Greenock Workers' Social Committee	...	...	A. Geddes.
Guild Communist Group	...	...	R. Page Arnot, W. M. Holmes, and Wm. Meller.
Halifax Marxian Group	...	...	A. Waight.
Land Colonisation and Industrial Guild	...	...	E. B. Reeves.
Manchester Guild Communist Group	...	...	Miss Moorhouse and Miss Ellen C. Wilkinson.
Northern Division Herald League (Communist Group)	...	...	Geo. Deacon.
St. Helens Socialist Society	...	...	J. R. Stead.
Sheffield Workers' Committee	...	...	W. H. Jackson.
Socialist Prohibition Fellowship	...	...	Geo. Anderson, E. Douglas, F. G. Simpson, and R. Stewart.
South Norwood Communist Group	...	...	E. T. Eames.
Southwark Herald League	...	...	C. Abbott and H. Trickey.
Walthamstow Communist Party	...	...	J. Chiswell and G. Goulding.

152 Delegates, with 211 Mandates.









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